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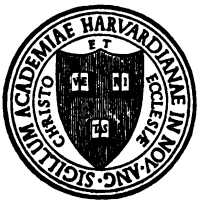

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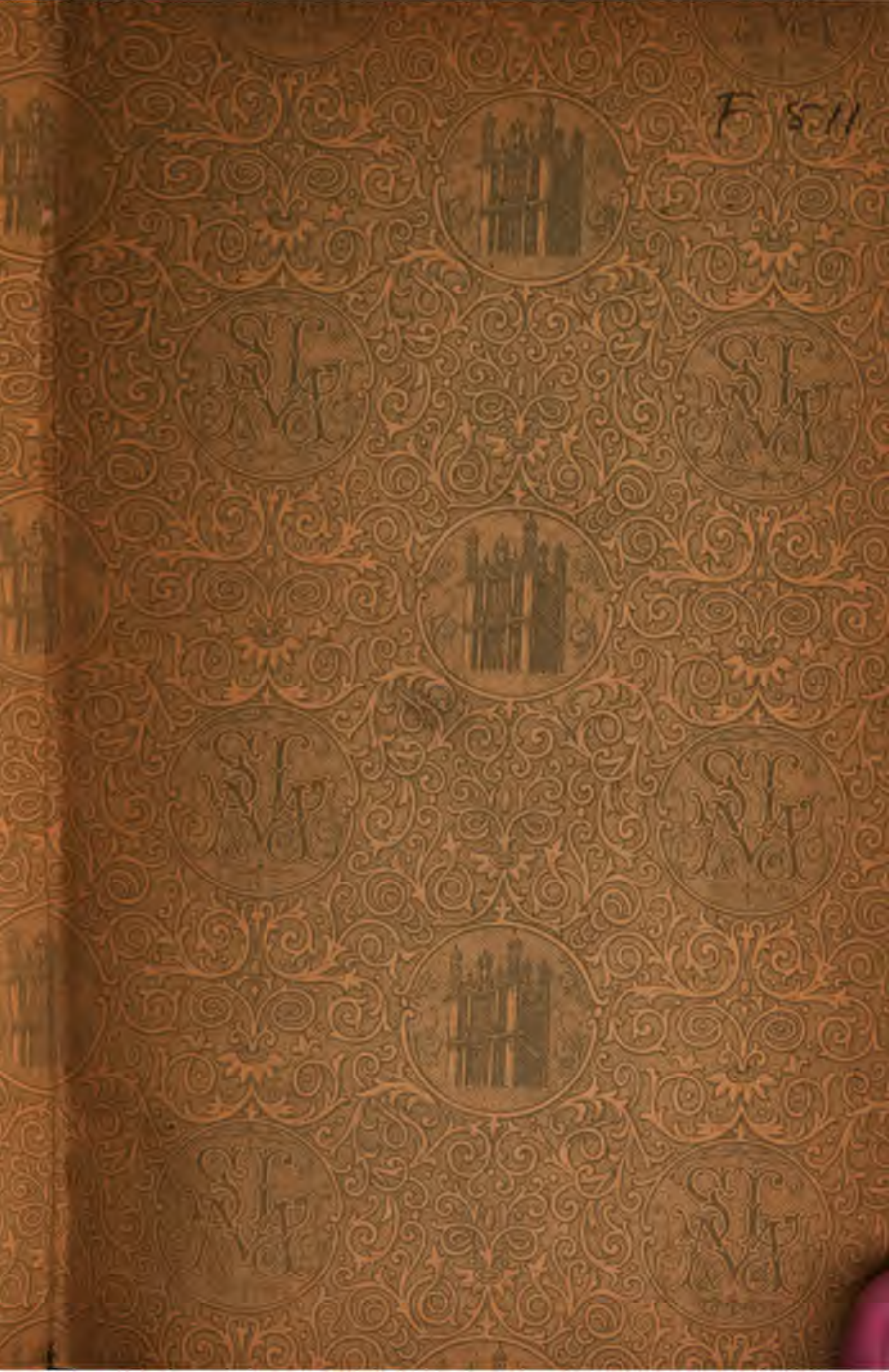

THE LAND OF GOLD

Yours faithfully
Julius M. Price

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THE LAND OF GOLD

THE NARRATIVE OF

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE WEST AUSTRALIAN GOLDFIELDS IN THE AUTUMN OF 1895

BY

JULIUS M. PRICE

Special Artist Correspondent of the "Illustrated London News"

AUTHOR OF "FROM THE ARCTIC OCEAN TO THE YELLOW SEA," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND SKETCHES BY THE AUTHOR

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TO

SIR WILLIAM J. INGRAM, BART.,

IN APPRECIATION OF

HIS GREAT INTEREST IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF

COLONIZATION AND EXPLORATION,

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY

Dedicated

BY THE AUTHOR.

NOTE.

I AM indebted to the Proprietors of the *Illustrated London News* for their kind permission to reproduce, in this work, the sketches and drawings I made for them whilst on my journey, a great many of which have already appeared in that paper; and also for the use of the text accompanying them, which has formed, in a measure, the basis of my book.

INTRODUCTION.

AUSTRALIA has recently attracted so much attention and interest amongst Englishmen, and, indeed, all over the world, that last autumn it occurred to me that a record of a visit to the western districts of the Colony might prove of some value to the public. On my mentioning the idea to Sir William Ingram of the *Illustrated London News*, he entered into my project with characteristic enthusiasm, and, finally, on behalf of the paper, I went out, traversed the best-known portions of the goldfields, and for the *Illustrated London News* I wrote a series of letters, accompanied by sketches, all of which duly appeared in the paper. Though necessarily somewhat curtailed, these articles seemed to me to attract sufficient attention, if I might judge from the letters which I received, to warrant my giving them a more permanent place, and a larger scope, in book form. The Colony, more especially in regard to its goldfields, has lately assumed so much importance in the minds of the people of Great Britain, that I feel

no further apology is needed for the publication of this brief record of my journey over a continent which, until recent developments, was a comparatively little known section of the great British Empire.

JULIUS M. PRICE

STUDIO,
22, GOLDEN SQUARE, LONDON, W.
March, 1896.

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MAP.

Western Australia, 1895	*At end*

THE LAND OF GOLD.

CHAPTER I.

FROM GRAVESEND TO KING GEORGE'S SOUND.

Ocean travelling of to-day—A visit to Western Australia decided upon—My outfit—The voyage on board the *Oceana*—Gibraltar—Suez—Aden—Colombo—The Indian Ocean.

A VOYAGE to Australia nowadays is so ordinary an occurrence that it would be supererogatory to attempt to make "copy" out of what must be the usual experiences of the "traveller" by any of the palatial steamers which seem to connect even the nethermost ends of the earth. Ocean travel has been so much improved during the last forty years, that a run out to the Antipodes is rather in the nature of a pleasant excursion than a tedious journey. Very different indeed is such a trip as compared with the voyages made by the sailing ships of the sixties, when the only possibility of enlivenment lay in the offchance of going down with all hands on board.

In spite of the attractions of an unusually gay London season, the opportunity which presented itself of a journey across the solitudes of Western Australia

was one not to be missed, more especially as such an expedition had long been one of my pet ideas; for this particular part of the world, forming though it does so important a section of Her Majesty's colonies, is still to a great extent a *terra incognita*, and I imagined must offer to those in search of adventure exceptional opportunities for gratifying their tastes. How little is really known of these distant regions one can scarcely conceive, and it is only with the greatest difficulty that any reliable information can be obtained as to the country, the climate, or the equipment necessary for such an expedition.

From Albany on the coast, to Perth the capital, and thence to the goldfields, I need scarcely say is all plain sailing; but, as to the comparatively wild regions beyond, nothing of any definite nature could be ascertained. By dint, however, of much inquiry, and with the assistance of an old squatter, I got together an outfit which seemed well adapted to meet any emergency, and it may be of interest at this point, to describe the items which go to make up the regulation outfit *à la* Silver & Co. for the goldfields. They were briefly as follows: a very light canvas tent with large double fly roof fitted with mosquito net lining, a portable folding table, lantern, canvas bath and bucket, and the usual ground sheets and other paraphernalia; one of Poore's American cooking-stoves (similar to one I had used in the Gobi desert, and which had then proved invaluable) fitted with a complete set of cooking and table requisites, and some camel-hair rugs and cork mattresses. Then there was also my wardrobe, which was contained in soft leather mule pack

of a complete outfit from white
errai hat, and the thickest home-
squito net head-dress, goggles,
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one's "swag"—a canvas valise—and which can be purchased in Perth for a few shillings. A good possum rug can also be had for about four or five pounds, together with the indispensable bush requisites, such as water-bags, knives and forks, mugs, etc., and are cheaper in Perth than in London. It is astonishing to the newcomer up country to see what a lot the practical bushmen can pack away in their "swags," and which can be thrown on a coach or slung across the back of a camel without fear of injury to their contents. Tents and cooking-stoves are unnecessary in the bush, where the climate is always equable enough for sleeping out in the open, though it is somewhat cold during the winter nights, while fuel is to be had everywhere in abundance. Tents, guns, medicine-chests, and the other paraphernalia mentioned above, are useless encumbrances unless one proposes living some months in the bush, and making a permanent encampment.

The voyage out was nothing less than a delightful holiday. Indeed, how could it be otherwise in such a ship as the *Oceana*, and with so charming a commander as Captain Stewart? I was also lucky enough to meet with several kindred spirits on board, and the long voyage seemed but a brief trip.

A peep in at Gibraltar, giving time for a drive round and for obtaining a rough idea of that wonderful fortification, a few hours on shore in Malta; then on to sleepy Brindisi, and, from there, an exhilarating run down to the Greek coast and across the blue Mediterranean to busy Port Said, "the home of the riff-raff and the donkey-boy;" thence on through the canal, a truly wonderfully weird voyage on a moonlight night, with

A HOT NIGHT IN THE RED SEA—THE SALOON DECK OF THE "OCEANA."

the deadly stillness of the vast desert hemming one in on either side. Passing Ismailia, in the early glow of the Egyptian morning, looking like some huge painting in the still air against the brightening sky, then on to Suez, where only a very short stay is made, then through the Red Sea, and a few hours on shore at Aden, with a run up to "camp" and a hasty peep at the picturesque native village, then across the Indian Ocean. After this, a nasty bit of monsoon weather to Colombo, where a whole day is spent in the midst of its tropical surroundings, all combine to make the time pass rapidly enough. After leaving Colombo, the voyage is one of absolutely unbroken monotony. Ten days of sky and sea. Until the line is passed, the heat is intense, though occasionally tempered by a breath from the monsoon. Then, as we run away from the sun a very noticeable change in the temperature becomes perceptible, for we are approaching the Antipodean winter, which, though never so severe as our own at home, still presents a very marked contrast to the tropical heat we so recently experienced. This, together with the rapidly shortening days, and the increasing cold, grey aspect of the sea and sky, all help to denote that we are running into mid-winter, and rapidly approaching our journey's end.

CHAPTER II.

KING GEORGE'S SOUND AND ALBANY.

Arrival off Western Australia—King George's Sound—The town of Albany—Its streets and climate—Fort recently constructed at Albany—Freemantle as a port of call for mail steamers instead of Albany—Mr. Cobert and the discovery of coal—Departure of the train for Perth—Hotel accommodation and social life in Albany.

THE first glimpse of the coast of Western Australia, as obtained in the cold grey light of a winter morning, is somewhat depressing, and standing shivering on the damp deck one finds oneself regretting the lovely summer weather one had so recently experienced. Even as the land is gradually approached its aspect improves but slightly, for the bleak, desolate-looking coast-line is of an uniform and almost unbroken brownish grey tint, which is in great contrast to one's recollections of the brilliant tropical scenery of Ceylon. Once, however, past Cape Lewin, as King George's Sound is reached, and as the rising sun gradually sheds a golden hue on the rugged expanse of precipitous bush-covered headlands, the effect for a few minutes strangely recalls parts of far-away England, but the illusion is only momentary. As far as the eye can see there is no sign of human handiwork, nothing to

break the perennial solitude which appears to reign over the land. It seems a pity that these fine bays, forming such splendid natural harbours, and the so long deserted shores, should still be waiting for the busy crowds which must some day awaken them. More especially does one feel this when one recollects how over populated are other parts of the world.

Steaming steadily down the coast we at length sight

ALBANY.

the headland known as Cape Vancouver, at the entrance to King George's Sound. Here the coast-line, receding rapidly, forms a magnificent natural harbour, opening out of which, through a narrow entrance, is the beautiful land-locked bay known as Princess Royal Harbour, on the northern shore of which nestles the picturesque little town of Albany, and opposite which we drop anchor. It is difficult to realise that five weeks have elapsed since we left Gravesend. The time has indeed slipped away with incredible rapidity,

and one feels more than reluctant to leave the home-like comforts and genial companionship of the *Oceana* for the "roughing-it" which we know is in store for us.

On a nearer inspection the little town of Albany improves considerably, for it has a somewhat scattered appearance as seen from the bay, but this effect is dispelled on landing. Its well-planned streets, though yet in the most embryo condition, promise to look remarkably well when (if ever) completed, for most of them have a background of rocky and well-wooded hills, which gives a very picturesque aspect to the place, whilst the luxuriant, semi-tropical vegetation to be seen everywhere, combined with the delightful aroma of the burning of gum-tree wood, impart a sense of repose which is particularly refreshing after the continual movement of ship-board life. A short walk through the town soon, however, reveals the fact that energy is not one of the salient virtues of its inhabitants, for it would be difficult to imagine anything more inert than the aspect of the streets. This impression is well founded, for, from what I learnt, it appears that the people only rouse themselves into activity on the arrival of the different steamers which call in here, and as soon as these have departed they lapse again into their usual state of somnolence, which seems to thoroughly justify the cognomen of "Sleepy Hollow," which was once given to the place. This condition of things certainly does not augur well for the rapid development of the town, and strikes even the most casual of observers as a pity, for Albany ought to become a place of some importance in the colony. Its climatic conditions and other advantages

combine to make it a kind of natural sanatorium. It could, therefore, be easily developed into a charming watering-place, which would, sooner or later, prove a boon to the inhabitants of the neighbouring bush townships. Apart from these peaceful attributes, Albany is a strategic point which has always been regarded as of the utmost importance in all schemes of Australian

A PICTURESQUE BIT OF ALBANY.

federal defence, while the value of its harbour, as a port of refuge or a coaling-station to the whole of Australia in the event of a war, cannot be overestimated. That this has not been overlooked is proved by the fact that the defence of the harbour has been jointly undertaken by the Imperial and Australian Governments, acting on the recommendation of the Committee of Commandants, which met in Albany in November, 1890.

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The fort, recently constructed, and which commands the entrance to the Sound, consists of three batteries armed with three 6-inch R.B.L. guns, mounted *en barbette*, and six 9-pounder field guns for the defence of the mine fields. These guns, which were a present to the Colony from the mother country, arrived from England in March, 1893. The garrison of this small though important stronghold consists of a company of garrison artillery from South Australia, with a nominal strength of thirty of all ranks, under the command of an artillery officer, nominated by the Imperial war office. It appears a ridiculously insignificant force in comparison with the importance of the position. The inertia of the inhabitants possibly accounts, to a great extent, also, for the slow developments in this direction, the cost of living in Albany being so high that any augmentation of the garrison at the fort would mean a large increase of annual expenditure. Otherwise, the position would probably be utilised as a good training-ground for the entire artillery force of the Colonies, with much advantage. Whilst, however, to a very great extent the want of energy noticeable in Albany is attributable to the climate, which is certainly enervating, there are other causes which may have in no small degree contributed to this state of affairs. It is not difficult to arrive at the real cause which, in a few words, may be said to be the Government scheme for making Freemantle the port of call for all the mail steamers. If this ever became an established fact it would sap the vitality of the south-western portion of the Colony to a great extent, and Albany is the chief town. The motion

which was proposed by the Premier, Sir John Forrest, at the postal conference in Hobart this year, "That so soon as Freemantle be made a safe and commodious harbour that the mail steamers be compelled to make it their port of call instead of Albany," produced quite a panic in the little town. Against this, however, there seems every probability of coal being found in close proximity to King George's Sound. If this be true, and judging from the opinion of experts there seems little doubt of it, it would completely revolutionise the entire shipping trade of the whole of Australia, for Albany is the first Australian port of call for vessels coming from Europe, and the last port for vessels leaving Australia. Consequently, the greater portion of cargo steamers could call at Albany, and the economy that would be effected by avoiding coaling at that most extravagant of stations, Colombo, would naturally, to a large extent, influence the movements of a trade which is yearly on the increase. Albany, I learnt, owes a deep debt of gratitude to a Mr. Cobert, a practical coal-mining expert, for his persistent efforts towards a realisation of this scheme. For some years past he has been working incessantly to discover the best locality in which to open the first mine. Realising the vast importance of such a discovery, the Government have at length come to the assistance of Mr. Cobert by lending him a boring machine, and supplying funds to test thoroughly the value of this portion of the Colony from a coal-mining point of view. If there should prove to be any future in this respect for Albany it will also in a great measure be due to the persistent enterprise of the Great Southern Railway Company, as

the district through which their line passes contains some of the best agricultural land in the Colony. This line, it may be of interest to mention, is the first constructed on the "Land Grant" principle, the Company having received 12,000 acres of land for each mile of rails laid. When one learns that the line is 243 miles in length, the area of country the Company holds amounts almost to a principality.

One of the chief events of the week in Albany is the departure of the train with the English and Colonial mails and passengers, on Sunday evening, for the capital of the Colony, Perth. If the weather be fine, at five o'clock, the hour of leaving, the station platform presents a most animated appearance, being converted for the nonce into a sort of promenade where all the town folk meet to discuss the events of the week and criticise the new arrivals. This weekly event, since the discovery of the goldfields and the consequent influx of travellers, has assumed a proportion which taxes the capacity of the station to its utmost, and could hardly have been contemplated by the most sanguine of optimists when the line was first started.

Hotel accommodation is not one of the strong features of Albany when one considers it is, so to speak, the front door of the Colony. I was, however, given to understand that I should look back even upon this as a little paradise compared to what I should have to put up with up country.

Social life in the tiny township is naturally limited, considering its inhabitants scarcely number three thousand. There are several charming families who seem to know how to make the best of life, spent though it

may be in so remote a corner of the earth. That latest of latter-day institutions, the Club, without which no community of Englishmen can be considered complete, is here a most well-appointed institution whose members thoroughly uphold the West Australian traditions of hospitality to the strangers within their gates.

CHAPTER III.

FROM ALBANY TO PERTH.

The Hon. J. A. Wright, of the Southern Railway—The journey from Albany to Perth—The Great Southern Railway—Description of the line and country through which it passes—The Australian bush—"Ring-barking"—The Eucalyptus gum-tree—Chinese labour—Aborigines—Mr. Piesse's farm at Katanning—A drive into the bush—Arrival at Beverley—The Government line from Beverley to Perth—The city of Perth.

I FOUND that a few days in Albany were more than sufficient. One could see all there was to see in a very few hours. On learning of my approaching departure from Perth, the courteous managing director of the Southern Railway, the Hon. J. A. Wright, placed his private saloon carriage at my disposal, and offered to accompany me on what he jocularly termed "a personally conducted tour up the line." As the result of my accepting his kindness the whole journey proved to be a sort of delightful excursion, for Mr. Wright possesses an inexhaustible fund of good nature together with the very keenest perception of humour, and, with his unfailing store of amusing reminiscences and anecdotes, it may be imagined that there was no time for a dull moment in his comfortable "car." To Cook or Gaze such a guide would be invaluable indeed!

The journey from Albany to Perth is not impressive, as far as speed is concerned, for in travelling a distance of 330 miles the train takes up about sixteen hours—which is not what may be considered dangerously rapid travelling. Still it must be remembered that high speed is never a feature of Colonial traffic.

Several prolonged stoppages in the case of the ordinary train have to be made *en route* for meals and other apparently important matters, which seem mostly to consist of experiments in shunting. So the average rate all through never amounts to more than twenty-three miles in an hour—which is nice quiet travelling, and gives one ample time to appreciate the scenery on either side. In my own case, however, I thoroughly enjoyed the novelty of being able to stop the train, which consisted of the saloon car and the luggage brake, at my own sweet will, and on several occasions I took advantage of my privilege either for the purpose of making a sketch or of taking a snapshot.

The line of the Great Southern Railway ends at a place called Beverley, some 242 miles from Albany, where it joins the Government railway from Freemantle to Perth. The rails are laid on a 3′ 6″ gauge, and the carriages and all the rolling-stock are on an equally small scale. Many of the carriages are built in America, although a good many of them are brought over in sections from England.

The country through which we passed was more than monotonous: dense flat wastes of forest and bush lay on either side, though the many miles of this dreary wilderness were occasionally lightened by extensive clearings or even by patches of cultivation, betokening

the presence of the enterprising settler. When these oases were seen they made one recollect that the country was neglected not because it was deemed unworthy of cultivation, but simply because man has yet to learn its value.

"The great drawback here," said Mr. Wright, on my expatiating on the magnificent possibilities of the country as we sat smoking our cigars in the verandah of the car, "is that as soon as intending settlers from England arrive out here and see the enormous amount of work in the way of clearing they have before them, instead of finding farms ready made as they expected, they in many cases lose heart—get into debt with the store-keepers and end by flocking to the towns, where in most cases they merge into the great army of loafers, living by hook or by crook. Of course, however, you will understand," he added, "this does not apply to men with a certain amount of capital, or to men with energy who have come out to the country with some experience at their back and the determination to make a home and a living—to such

THE BUSH.

men the prospects which this country offers are unbounded. In my opinion," he continued, warming to a subject he evidently had at heart, "the great secret of successful colonisation would be solved by the selection of colonists before they left the mother country, though the difficulties of such a scheme are practically insurmountable."

Land, in this part of the colony, is absurdly cheap, and even along the line of railway there are still thousands and thousands of acres for sale, at the nominal figure of from 10*s.* to £1 per acre, according to the density of the timber and bush on them, that requiring least clearing fetching the higher figure.

The purchase money is payable in instalments covering a period of twenty years, subject to certain restrictions, such as compulsory living on the property, fencing it in, and generally improving it within certain fixed periods after possession is taken. The conditions did not, however, strike me as onerous.*

The *modus operandi* of clearing the forest varies but seldom. "Ring-barking" is chiefly resorted to where the timber is very heavy and where time is no immediate object. This method of tree destruction is simple in the extreme. A ring of bark is cut away round the trunk some three feet from the ground. This effectually kills the sap, and within two seasons the entire tree is in a complete state of decay and ready for the big fire which is eventually kindled, and the effect of miles and miles of dead trees waving their gaunt leafless branches in the bright sunlight is indescribably weird and depressing, whilst the sight of

* See Appendix A.

so much reckless waste of fine timber is positively irritating, for there appears to be quite a fever for tree destruction. In fact to such an extent is this the case that often not so much as a bush is left, even to protect or beautify the surroundings of the few isolated settlements, which in consequence stand out against the newly cleared ground in all their hideous nakedness of brick wall and zinc roof. Of the many varieties of the ever present Eucalyptus gum-tree the Jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) and the Karri (*Eucalyptus diversicolor*) are perhaps the most in request at the present moment. Immense quantities of the former wood are annually exported from the Colony to London, where it is extensively used for wood pavement and also for railway sleepers. It is estimated that there are in the Colony at the present moment at least 100,000 acres of these magnificent trees, many of

A JARRAH FOREST.

which are as high as 350 feet. Assuming there are 300 trees to the acre, this would give about 2000 loads of timber to the acre; so there is probably sufficient wood in Western Australia to pave all the cities of Europe for many years to come. The durability and imperviousness of the Jarrah are so extraordinary that it may perhaps be of interest to enumerate a few irrefutable facts about it, in order to give some slight idea of the quality of this wood. Exposed to the action of sea water for over thirty years, it has been found still uninjured and so sound as to be capable of receiving a high polish. For London pavement it is invaluable, as, from all accounts, it has been found impossible to wear it out even when it has been exposed for long periods to traffic under the most trying conditions.

The great difficulty new settlers have to contend with out here is that of getting labour at anything like reasonable rates, the ordinary farm hand or common labourer having an exorbitant idea of his own value. The "working man" who, in England, would earn 18*s.* a week demands, the moment he sets foot in Western Australia, a weekly salary of three or four times the amount, and is indeed from all accounts the curse of the Colony.

On one or two stations we passed Chinese labour had been used, not only to great advantage, but with considerable gain on the score of economy, and, from what I gathered, the general idea of landowners out here is that the employment of a large number of the industrial Celestials would help considerably to open up and push forward the development of the Colony. Political motives, however, generally stand in the way

of any employment of Chinese on a large scale—for many of the capitalist class of settlers have seats in the Parliament at Perth which they do not care to jeopardise. Meanwhile this magnificent country, with a line of railway to feed it, is lying idle in consequence, in most cases, of the dearth of cheap labour.*

There are few stopping-places of any importance for some distance from Albany—most of the railway stations having sprung into existence since the Great Southern Railway was opened for traffic, and though many of them have high-sounding names, a few shanties and occasionally a "bush store" are what they generally consist of.

What chiefly strikes one in this solitude is the utter absence of human or animal life everywhere, not even so much as a bird is ever visible to break the eternal monotony. The aborigines themselves, to whom in the past these wilds were perhaps a happy hunting-ground, have long since departed, or are dying out so rapidly in obedience to some unaccountable law of nature, that in a couple of generations probably not one of them will remain. All, in fact, appears to point to a sort of intermediate or waiting stage. Nature is as though expecting the approach of the white man for the awakening from her long sleep.

With regard to the aborigines, Mr. Wright told me two amusing incidents of the effect the opening of the railway had on the natives. They assembled at many points in order to examine the new mystery, and all agreed that there was something very uncanny about the train because it left no sign of a track, and on

* See Appendix B.

seeing the telegraph wires on both sides of the line they expressed their opinion that it was a d—— bad fence, because anybody could get under it!

We stopped at a rising little place named Katanning for the night, our saloon carriage, in which we were to sleep, being shunted into a goods shed. A capital supper at the station "hotel" (which by the way was lighted by electricity) and a stroll through the village finished up an exceedingly pleasant and interesting day.

ABORIGINES.

The following morning was spent in viewing the farm of a Mr. Piesse, one of the big landowners of the district, a gentleman who has done much towards opening up this part of the country. Although it was not very long since the whole neighbourhood had been covered with bush, so energetic had he been that he possessed, at the time of our visit, many acres of splendid land under cultivation. His wheat, I learnt, was thriving capitally, and some fruit-trees which had only been planted a couple of years before in some gravelly loamy soil were flourishing in the most extraordinary and precocious manner. He told me he

intended making a special feature of vines, with the idea of eventually producing a wine of the country. To my mind the soil appeared far too rich for the purpose, though this is the usual characteristic of all Australian vineyards I believe, and is undoubtedly the principal reason of the extraordinarily heavy character of the wines produced in Australia. Several thousands of acres at this station were still in their virgin state, but were being rapidly cleared by an ingenious method called "tree pulling." With a chain and lever arrangement worked by a horse, the largest trees were up-rooted in a few minutes, the action of the contrivance being so powerful that the stoutest tree could not withstand it, though of course the absence of deep root, which is so remarkable a characteristic of the Australian trees, considerably facilitated the operation. All around was such a scene of utter wreck and confusion that I naturally inquired how many months it would take to clear away the chaos of fallen trunks, and to my astonishment I was informed that in less than a week the whole lot would be burnt up, the ashes, which were advantageously utilised as manure, being carefully spread over the ground. This method of tree extermination struck me as a vast improvement on the primitive process of "ring-barking" already described, the tree being thus completely removed. The cost was however much higher, so that it did not come within the means of the smaller farmers. Near a small station called Broomhill, not far from here, I learnt that Lord Brassey had 23,000 acres on which he was sheep farming with satisfactory results.

As I was not to continue my journey to Perth till

the evening, my host suggested a drive into the bush during the afternoon, and my taking a gun on the chance of a shot at a kangaroo, a suggestion which I cordially accepted. A few tamar, a sort of kangaroo hare, were, however, the only result of the expedition though a charming drive through the wildest of forest scenery imaginable amply compensated for the poorness of the sport. When the time came for departure it was certainly with feelings of regret I left the little township in which I had spent so pleasant a time.

In the early hours of the morning we reached Beverley, the terminus of the Great Southern Railway, and I was awakened by a series of shunting, or rather bumping, manœuvres, through which our carriage particularly seemed to be undergoing. For fully half-an-hour this interesting operation lasted, though what the result of it was, except to effectually wake us up at five o'clock in the morning, could not be ascertained as we found ourselves when it was over within a few yards of our point of departure. The bumping was, I afterwards found, caused by the colonial system of loose coupling; the detrimental effect of such a method on rolling stock should be obvious, though the colonial mind has not yet grasped the fact. The Government line from Beverley to Perth, a distance of some hundred miles, is certainly the most curious specimen of railway engineering it has ever been my luck to travel over. Having been laid as cheaply as possible, from start to finish it is quite a series of surprises, which are more interesting to read about than to experience. To describe it as constructed on the "switchback" principle would be to put it mildly, for

when laying it no attempt whatever was made to overcome any physical difficulties the country presented, with the result that the rail runs uphill and down dale without any attention to gradients and other such trifles. Cuttings are unknown quantities, and although a high range of hills, the "Darling" had to be crossed, there was no such a thing as a tunnel anywhere. Standing on the platform of the car looking back along the line, the effect is most extraordinary, and one wonders how any engine can be built to stand such terrific work; and as to the curves, well, I had never before believed the story of the new engine-driver, somewhere in South America, who pulled up in great alarm because he saw some lights in front of him which proved, however, to be the rear lights of his own train; but this bit of line could almost give that one points and win easily. Feeling oneself tearing at full speed down the steepest gradients (many of them I noticed were as much as one in thirty) was most exciting, and it was often a wonder to me that the train did not run away with the engine. That accidents have not been of frequent occurrence is more a matter of good luck than anything else. An amusing anecdote was told me of an English engineer who was being shown this line, and was allowed to travel on the locomotive. The movements of the driver as he deftly manipulated the brake at each variation of the innumerable grades appeared to interest him even more than the actual line. After watching the man intently for some time he suddenly remarked with enthusiasm, "Why this man is not an engine-driver, but an artist!" This sensational

line I learn is shortly to be abandoned, as the Government have in progress a "deviation" which will to a great extent do away with this "picturesque route."

This part of the journey was but a repetition of previous experiences, endless wildernesses of forest and scrub, which become intensely wearisome to the eye. Here and there one saw a station, with perhaps a few scattered houses and fields, until we lessened the distance between us and the capital, when the appearance of the country rapidly improved, the bush almost imperceptibly disappearing giving place to prosperous-looking agricultural districts, splendid grass-land and well-laid roads then appeared, and everything round one gave indications of our approach to the centre of the civilisation of the Colony. The last portion of the journey was delightful, and in the bright sunlight all looked so old-fashioned and settled that it was hard to realise one was still within touch of the desolate solitude of the bush.

VIEW NEAR PERTH.

A bend in the line at last brought us in view of the city of Perth, with its many fine buildings standing out

in white relief against its background of foliage, and looking singularly oriental in the clear antipodean atmosphere, whilst the beautiful river winding through the valley at our feet, and on which this fair city stands, lent an additional charm to the scene.

In a few minutes the train glided into a large and handsome station, the platform of which was thronged with a busy crowd of people, and I found I was in the capital of Western Australia.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CITY OF PERTH.

Description of Perth—Sir W. C. F. Robinson, G.C.M.G., Governor of the Colony—Hospitality in the city—The constitution of Western Australia—Local self-government—Legal luminaries in Perth—Hay Street—Prominent Buildings—The Weld Club—Sanitation—Unfinished state of the City.

It would be difficult to imagine a more pleasant or more picturesquely situated city than the capital of Western Australia, and the most casual stroll through its broad streets or along its beautiful riverside drive is sufficiently convincing proof that it has not been designated "the fair city of Perth" without reason. When the building of the place is complete it will vie with any other city of Australia, for at present Perth, through untoward circumstances, is somewhat behindhand. Events in Western Australia have not shaped themselves quickly or definitely as in the other colonies where cattle-rearing, sheep-farming, or agriculture have for many years past represented huge and growing industries. This may therefore, to a certain extent, account for the somewhat backward state of affairs which has existed in this city till almost recently, otherwise it is difficult to explain how so important a place, the foundation stone of which was laid as far back as 1889, should still look unfinished and number

so small a population as 12,429, which in proportion to its area of 3850 acres is certainly insignificant. Other parts of Australia owe their present vitality in a great measure to the discovery of gold, and so it will undoubtedly be with Western Australia, and Perth will, as the centre of the Colony, be the first to benefit by this marvellous influx of good fortune in the shape of her goldfields; and the discovery of Coolgardie will undoubtedly in future years be looked upon as the stepping-stone of Western Australia's era of prosperity. Already the effect it has had on the quiet steady-plodding townsfolk is remarkable; they seem, one and all, to have suddenly awakened to the fact that to make hay while the sun shines is an excellent axiom, and that now or never is the opportunity. As the result of this advent of eager crowds of prospectors, miners and others on their way to the goldfields, and who are forced to make a halt before passing Perth, on all sides is now heard the hammer of the carpenter and the trowel of the bricklayer, whilst houses and stores are rising as if by magic. It must not, however, be inferred from this that Perth as a city dates from the discovery of the goldfields. For some years past under the able management of its local authorities it has gradually been rising into a condition befitting the capital of the Colony, so the sudden advent of good fortune has not found it altogether unprepared for so lucky an emergency. It is now more than four years since responsible Government of the Colony was inaugurated by Sir W. C. F. Robinson, G.C.M.G. His excellency who had twice held the governorship of the Colony was entrusted with the responsible task of starting

PERTH.

off on its new career, since which auspicious occasion there has been shown no lack of energy by the Government for the time being in power. All their proceedings have been marked by a despatch and energy which speak well for the prosperity of the country and have met with general approval. Public works and schemes, many of them of the greatest utilitarian value, have been so constantly on the *tapis* that the spacious

ST. GEORGE'S TERRACE, PERTH.

Government offices have proved almost too small to house the increasing army of officials and draughtsmen. In fact, had the population increased in proportion to the energy manifested by the Government, there can be no doubt but that Perth would now be among the most populous of Australian cities.

Nevertheless, in spite of the somewhat intermediate stage through which Perth, in common with all other cities in Western Australia, is passing, it is an agreeable place in which to spend a few days; and although there

is not yet the bustle and activity or the gaiety of large cities, there is still a certain amount of life about it which makes the time roll by very pleasantly. That most characteristic of Australian virtues—hospitality—is here lavished with an open-handedness which makes the new arrival feel at once at his ease, and quite dispels any preconceived ideas he may have had as to the value of a letter of introduction; not, however, that "form" is in any way dispensed with. In fact, this excessive formality is particularly striking to the newcomer from the mother country, especially when he realises that the entire population of the whole Colony does not amount to that of a small English provincial town (say about the size of Brighton), whilst the inhabitants of the capital are not equal in numbers to those of Herne Bay. Indeed, one is not long in the place before discovering that etiquette with all its conventionalities is observed at Perth with a regard to the smallest minutiæ which is almost droll in its seriousness. Loyalty to the "old country" is here displayed in quite as marked a degree as in the sister colonies. The way in which "Society" circles round the Government House proves a regard for "tradition" which is from all accounts so great a characteristic of other parts of Australia. The receptions of the Administrator and Lady Onslow are in a comparative degree as high social functions as any given by the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. All the luncheon or dinner parties of leaders of the Government, whilst Parliament is sitting, are of the most orthodox official character, and would not reflect discredit on Downing Street itself. The kindness and hospitality which were shown me by that

JULIUS M. PRICE, ESQ.,

SPECIAL ARTIST AND CORRESPONDENT OF

THE ILLUSTRATED

LONDON NEWS

MENU.

HORS D'OEUVRES.

Oysters au Naturel. Caviare.

SOUPS.

à la Tortué. Consommé with Rice.

FISH.

Fillet of Whiting en Frittôt.

Boiled Sea Mullet and Brown Caper Sauce.

ENTREES.

Grilled French Cutlets, with Green Peas. Compôte of Pigeon.

Asparagus on Toast. Curried Prawns.

JOINTS.

Roast Sirloin Beef. Roast Haunch Mutton.

Roast Chicken. Braised York Ham with Sauce Madière.

Corned Ox Tongue.

SWEETS.

Macedoine of Fruit. Cognac and Pine Apple Jellies.

Chocolate and Vanilla Creams. Apricot Meringue.

Tipsy Cake Swiss Roll. Jam Tartlets.

Black Currant Tart.

Anchovy Canapes Pâte de Foie Gras.

DESSERT.

"OSBORNE," CLAREMONT, 8th AUGUST, 1895.

W. T. ASTLEY, MANAGER. *Café Noir.*

most genial of premiers, Sir John Forrest and his charming wife, as well as by Sir George Shenton, the Speaker of the House, the Hon. H. J. Saunders, Mr. Wm. A. Mercer and others, will long remain in my memory as amongst the most delightful reminiscences of my Australian visit.

It may be of interest here to give a slight idea of the Constitution of Western Australia, in order to explain to a certain degree the extraordinary amount of officialism which rules in the capital and which seems to pervade all classes; for at every step one seems to come in contact with the minister for this or commissioner for that, till one at length wonders whether they are all officials, as in the case of the South American state where, to avoid jealousies, the army consists entirely of officers! The Government of the Colony is vested in the Governor, who is appointed by the Crown—and who acts under the advice of a Cabinet composed of five Ministers. The Executive Council, which consists of the Governor, the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney-General, the Colonial Treasurer, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, the Commissioner of Railways, the Director of Public Works, and the Minister for Mines. The Parliament is composed of two Houses—the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. The Colony is represented in the Council or "Upper House" by twenty-one members, or three for each electoral province, whilst in the Assembly it returns thirty-three members representing so many electorates. When therefore it is remembered that the entire population of Western Australia at the end of 1893 was only 65,064, it cannot be said that the electors are

poorly represented at the seat of Government. As a matter of fact the way the seats are distributed affords some material for astonishment. For instance, the capital, with 9617 inhabitants, has no less than three members; Freemantle, with 7077, has the same number; whilst the entire goldfields district, with a population roughly computed at 25,000, has only two representatives. Two other districts, East Kimberley and Gascoyne, with an electoral roll of twenty-six and twenty-four respectively, are each represented by a member. The comparative calculation which resulted in this remarkable distribution of seats is somewhat incomprehensible to the ordinary mind. It may be argued that the enormous tracts of country so sparsely populated and the consequent distance to be traversed render it necessary for arrangement, but the proportion of 2 to 25,000, as against 3 to 9617, is certainly confusing.

Local self-government also exists in most of the principal townships, the power to declare any town a municipality being vested in the Governor. The number of councillors for each town varies according to the population. Where it is less than one thousand it is six; over one thousand and less than five, nine; over five thousand, twelve; exclusive in each case of the chairman. Apart from these municipalities there are also district road boards, which are appointed to represent the several road districts into which the Colony is divided, and which are defined or altered at any time at the option of the Government.

The majesty of the law in Perth is well represented by quite a big array of legal luminaries, whilst the

requirements of the city are looked after by the corporation, which is presided over by a mayor.

It will be seen, therefore, that everything is ready in Western Australia in the way of government for the population which has been so slow in arriving.

The principal business thoroughfare, Hay Street, is not at present an imposing one, being far too narrow,

HAY STREET, PERTH.

consisting, as it mainly does, of a succession of small buildings of mean elevation and no distinctive pretensions. There are here and there a few more imposing structures, which, however, only seem to show up the remainder in strong contrast. The public and other buildings are, in many cases, worthy of remark. On St. George's Terrace—a really handsome thoroughfare—are several fine structures which would be considered good specimens of architecture in any

city. Prominent among these are the Post-office, a large block of buildings forming one wing of the Government Offices—the offices of the Union Bank of Australia; the National Bank of Australasia; the Mutual Provident Society and the National Mutual Life Association of Australasia—whilst hidden in a mass of semi-tropical vegetation and surrounding well-kept grounds stands Government House, a large stone edifice of Gothic design and most picturesque appearance.

Here, as elsewhere, club-life is one of the chief social institutions, and the Weld Clubhouse, where, through the courtesy of its members, I was provided with comfortable quarters, has been recently erected on a beautiful site overlooking the town, and is, in my opinion, the finest architectural achievement in the city; whilst it is also certainly one of the best organised and managed clubs I was ever in anywhere. It reminded me very much of that most perfect institution at Shanghai, the staff, which, curiously enough, is composed entirely of Chinamen, completing the resemblance.

The rush to the goldfields, and the consequent rapid increase of population in the capital, has also had the effect of attracting the attention of British speculators to Perth, several big syndicates having acquired valuable leases, on which building operations are in full swing, and which promise fine results.

The city is plentifully supplied with pure water by the Perth Waterworks Company, who have a reservoir seventeen miles distant in the Darling Hills. The sanitary conditions of the district are in the hands of a local board of health, so the city is in as healthy a state as is possible, and the death rate from all causes

remarkably low. The Government Hospital, which is looked after by a competent staff of medical men, though not quite up to the requirements of the city, has nevertheless considerably helped to further this beneficent state of affairs. A new building is shortly to be erected.

The designs for a theatre are being prepared; for

THE WELD CLUB, PERTH.

hitherto professional histrionic art, as represented by travelling companies, has only found a temporary home in the town-hall or other convenient, or rather inconvenient, spot. That such an undertaking will prove a success need scarcely be doubted if good entertainments are provided; for I learn from a resident that one company, in 1891, netted £1000 in a stay of ten weeks, which might reasonably be considered fairly "good business" for the Colony.

There remains, however, a great deal yet to be done before the city itself can be considered finished. The busy tramways, the cable cars, the electric light, all the advantages in fact which are considered absolutely indispensable in the most mushroom of American townships, are here conspicuously absent. Beyond a few dilapidated hansom cabs which ply for hire at ruinous fares, there is absolutely no means of locomotion from one end of the town to the other. An energetic man

HAY STREET, PERTH.

with a couple of omnibuses would have the road to himself. But such an individual until just recently was quite an unknown quantity in Perth. On dark nights a few gas jets and the oil lamps in the different stores are all that illumine the surroundings. When, however, there is a moon the gas is dispensed with, on the score of its expense. With so unlimited a supply of fuel as the surrounding bush offers, electric lighting ought to be so cheap as to be within the means of all classes, and in towns so largely built of wood

as are those of Western Australia ought to be made the only legal illuminant. One or two big blazes will, however, be the necessary misfortunes in order to open the eyes of the authorities to the advisability of this reform in the lighting. In America they have had many severe experiences to teach them this lesson, with the result that the electric light is often brought in when the township is first planned. All these, as well as many other adjuncts to a thriving centre, promise, however, so I learnt, to soon become accomplished facts; and the next few years ought to see Perth amongst the handsomest and most thriving cities in Australia.

ST. GEORGE'S TERRACE, PERTH.

CHAPTER V.

FREEMANTLE.

The Swan River—Government improvements—Excursion by steam launch from Perth to Freemantle—Limestone quarries—Curious old wooden bridge near Freemantle—Mr. O'Connor's Harbour scheme—Construction of the breakwaters—Firing a torpedo—A Dredger brought from England to Freemantle—Banquet by the Press of Western Australia.

"THE chief port of the Colony," as Freemantle is usually, though somewhat prematurely, designated, has a population of rather over eight thousand, and is situated at the mouth of the Swan River, about twelve miles

FREEMANTLE, FROM THE SEA.

west-south-west of Perth, with which it is connected by road, railway, river, telegraph and telephone.

Though as yet only a "harbour" in name, the extensive improvements now being carried out by the Government to widen and deepen the estuary of the

river, promise, when finished, to give it a firm foothold in the favour of the captains of the various ships which trade up the western coast, although much more important results are anticipated in return for the vast expenditure the scheme will necessitate. Learning of my desire to inspect the works of which I had heard so much since my arrival in the Colony, the Government courteously placed their steam launch at my disposal, so one afternoon, accompanied by Mr. Dillon Bell, the engineer in charge of the works, and a small party of journalistic friends, a delightful excursion was made. The weather was as perfect as could be desired, and in the bright Australian sunshine with the river's banks clothed in their perennial verdure it was hard to realise that we were still in the antipodean midwinter. Between Perth and its seaport are many beautiful riverside suburbs, where, during the almost tropical heat of the summer, those fortunate enough to be able to afford the luxury can find cool retreats after business hours in the city. Claremount, Peppermint Grove, Cottlesloe, and other villages nestling among the trees, were pointed out as we steamed past on the placid water. A brief stoppage was made at a place called Rocky Bay, a short distance before reaching our destination, to afford an opportunity for visiting the quarries from which the limestone for the two projected breakwaters is being extracted. The scene was a busy and animated one, and amply demonstrated that the Government, having decided to make Freemantle the big seaport of the Colony, were neglecting nothing on the score of energy in the carrying out of the scheme. Quite a small army of labourers were

hard at work quarrying and blasting out the stone, which was hoisted on to hopper-trucks by four large steam cranes, and when a sufficient number of the trucks were filled they were immediately taken down the line by railway engines and "tipped" on to the breakwater, many hundreds of tons of stone being thus deposited every day. Even at this rate several years

FREEMANTLE.

would elapse before the two breakwaters would be finished, to say nothing of the rest of the harbour works.

After a stroll round, the launch was joined again at a spot some little distance further down the river, when a few minutes' steaming brought us in view of the town of Freemantle. Here we passed under a curious old wooden bridge, built of the famous Jarrah

wood, some thirty years ago, by convict labour. Although exposed to the action of wind and weather for so many years, the structure, which resembled some huge centipede in its bare nakedness of outline, appeared in no way deteriorated, and I was informed that not a flaw had been detected in it since the day it was built. Just beyond the bridge the river gives a bend, and we came in sight of the broad expanse of water which it is proposed to convert into a spacious harbour. A few hundred yards beyond, the breakers of the Indian Ocean rolled in majestically till arrested in their progress by the bar of rock which extends across the mouth of the river. The scene was a strikingly interesting one, and rendered the more so to me on account of the many controversial opinions I had heard expressed as to the practicability of the works before me. The scheme, which is being carried out, was designed by the engineer-in-chief of the Colony, Mr. C. O'Connor, a gentleman who has had much experience in New Zealand in the matter of harbour construction. His scheme, roughly speaking, is to afford protection to shipping alongside the existing jetty, which is to be considerably extended; to protect the mouth of the river, the bar across which he proposes to remove in order to deepen the estuary; and, for some distance up on either side, to reclaim sufficient of the shallow water for conversion into wharves, docks, etc. For this purpose his idea is primarily to construct two breakwaters from the heads at either side of the mouth of the River Swan, and, whilst these are in course of construction, to remove by dredging and blasting the reef which has hitherto impeded free entry from the sea to the river.

The work was commenced some three years ago, and the magnitude of the undertaking could, to some extent, be appreciated when it was seen how little, comparatively, had been done in the time. As we crossed the bar the water was so shallow that at one point our little launch actually grated over the rocky bottom, and this gave us a fair idea of the amount of work to be accomplished before the harbour will "afford safe and commodious accommodation to the largest ocean-going steamers"—as the official description of the scheme

HARBOUR WORKS, FREEMANTLE.

complacently puts it. Some short distance away, in the very middle of the stream, were some thirty men busily engaged, on a large trestle-built sort of platform, boring the rock ready for blasting; many were at work standing in the water, which was so shallow as not to reach above their waists. After a short run out into the rolling sea from the head of the breakwater in course of construction, we paid a visit to a large dredger at work close by, from whose decks a very good impression could be obtained of what was being done all round, and the length of time necessary to accomplish

what was planned out. The north breakwater, which was by far the most advanced, would not, I was informed, be completed for a long time to come. The rate of progress, which is about five feet per diem, was considered fairly satisfactory; at the time of our visit only about half of its proposed length of 2950 feet was completed, whilst the southern arm, which will extend some 2830 feet, was barely commenced. Of course all the works are regulated by the funds at the command of the Colony, and so cannot be proceeded with at any very great rate. The entire cost of the undertaking is to be £800,000, for which sum the estimate provides 6900 feet of good wharfage accommodation in a land-locked harbour, the entrance to which is to be 600 feet wide and thirty feet deep at low tide, and the two rubble breakwaters above mentioned. Whether or no the harbour when complete will be as eagerly resorted to by "the largest ocean-going steamers," remains of course to be seen. From what I gathered, however, from the captain of the *Oceana*, there is no love felt among seafaring men for this reef-encircled western coast; they say no matter how much Freemantle itself may be improved as a harbour, the outlying patches of rock will, however well-lighted, always present risks from which the entrance to the natural harbour of King George's Sound is free. The Colonial Government are evidently determined to upset all these old-fashioned ideas, and have made up their minds at any hazard to have their chief seaport within easy distance of their metropolis. The intention is good, and the result will prove its efficiency. What struck me chiefly as being against the success of the under-

taking, looking at it purely from an "outsider's" point of view, was the fact that in planning the harbour the engineer had not sufficiently taken into account the ever increasing dimensions of the modern steamships, and that when Freemantle Harbour has been finished, it will be found almost impossible for a big ship to be turned round in it with any degree of safety, unless it has the whole place to itself. This, to my mind, is a very serious obstacle to the ultimate success of the scheme.

FIRING A TORPEDO, FREEMANTLE HARBOUR WORKS.

I chanced to be present when a couple of torpedoes and two or three dynamite charges were exploded at the bar—sending a column of water and a shower of stones and rock high into the air. Happening to inquire whether the dredging machine on which we were standing was constructed in the Colony, I learnt with surprise that it was brought out from England absolutely intact and under its own steam, and also

that the voyage, which had occupied over six months, had been one of such tremendous risks and continual anxiety as to make the captain's reason give way, and that he had been in a lunatic asylum ever since.

The sun was low in the horizon when we made our way back after our interesting excursion, and as we steamed swiftly up the quiet reaches of the broad

THE DREDGER BROUGHT OUT FROM ENGLAND, FREEMANTLE HARBOUR WORKS.

river I could not help pondering on all I had seen, and wondering if ever this now so quiet and deserted watercourse would become the animated highway the Colony so fondly hoped it would, and whether Freemantle would ever be the port of Australia. We stopped at a charming little riverside resort called "Osborne," where, at the well-appointed hotel, I was accorded a banquet by the Press of Western Australia,

and which would have done honour to even a London *chef*. Some fifty covers were laid. Speeches and toasts of the most cordial nature followed, and the friendship and good fellowship which was evinced towards me, a wandering brother journalist from the old country, will remain in my memory as one of the pleasantest episodes of my visit to Perth.

ARRIVAL OF A TRAIN FROM PERTH AT SOUTHERN CROSS.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM PERTH TO COOLGARDIE.

The Railway journey from Perth to Southern Cross—Scene at the railway station—Arrival at Southern Cross—The mail coach—The coach journey to Coolgardie—Traffic and caravans *en route*—Water supply in the Australian Bush—Post stations—A night in a bush inn—The gold escort from Coolgardie—Police in Australia—"Spielers" or blackguards—A roadside letter-box—Exciting race into Coolgardie.

THE journey from Perth to the goldfields of Coolgardie, a distance of 450 miles, occupies forty-eight hours, of which sixteen hours are spent in the railway, which at the time of my visit only reached as far as a place called Southern Cross, and the remainder of the time was spent in one of the ramshackle vehicles dignified in Australia with the name of "coach," and which perform the 120 miles in of road through the bush to the now famous mining township. The railway was then being rapidly pushed forward northward from its terminus in obedience to the exigencies of the increasing traffic to the various goldfields, and before this book goes to press the whole of the extension to Coolgardie will be complete, and the coach road through the interminable wilderness of bush and scrub will be a thing of the past, and without a single regret on account of its disappearance, except of course on the part of

the coach proprietors, who have naturally been reaping a golden harvest pending the advent of the iron horse.

My preparations for this part of the journey were soon completed, as I learnt that the portion on which I was now about to enter practically meant saying good-bye for the time to civilisation. So I decided to reduce my baggage as much as was compatible with the few necessaries I should absolutely require when roughing it in the bush. A small selection of my commonest clothes, consisting of riding breeches, Norfolk jacket, leggings, flannel shirts, and sleeping suits, and my heaviest boots, made up the sum total of my wardrobe; all such links with civilisation as white shirts, collars, dress clothes, and so forth, being ruthlessly left behind to await my return after the arduous journey. This kit, together with a 'possum rug (which I had been strongly advised to buy as a protection against the cold of the night in the bush), my tent, cooking apparatus—both of which I found superfluous and were soon discarded—and a plentiful supply of tinned provisions and Bouillon Fleet, made up all that I learnt was necessary for the rough journey I had before me. I was astonished to find that preserved provisions, besides presenting more palatable varieties, were cheaper in Perth than I could have brought them out from London, coming as they do from the other colonies. It is surprising how little is known in England of what can be obtained out there.

The train which I left by was crowded to its utmost, and the scene the platform presented before its departure was a most extraordinary one. It would be a difficult matter to give any adequate idea of the motley

crowd I saw around me—all evidently attracted to Western Australia by the possible chance of making a fortune. Every nation on the earth appeared to be represented—Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Englishmen, Greeks, Russians, all rubbing shoulders together; and all classes, from the wealthy speculator to the broken-down clerk; whilst many a sunburnt miner from the other colonies helped to make up as incongruous a lot of fellow-passengers as it has ever been my lot to travel with.

The railway journey is a fairly comfortable though a long one; a good supper at one of the stations, where a stoppage of an hour for that purpose is made, and a good stiff glass of hot grog before one turns in and rolls oneself up in one's rugs, makes one sleep through the night, cold though it may be, as soundly as though in an hotel.

Southern Cross, which we reached in the early hours of the morning, presented a very bleak and uninviting appearance, being nothing more than a big conglomeration of corrugated iron huts clustered round the base of a rocky hill, on the top of which the bare timbers of a mine shaft were outlined clear and sharp against the pale pure blue of the morning sky. There were no signs of vegetation anywhere, the ground for miles round having been completely denuded of all timber for firewood and mining purposes, when the first rush for the goldfields reached here, some years ago. It would have been impossible to imagine a more bleak and dreary scene than met my gaze on this the first stage of my journey, coming as it did so suddenly after the comfortable quarters I had just been

enjoying. There was no time however to be lost in idle regrets, for the coach started in half-an-hour's time, and some breakfast had to be got before starting, as there was no other chance of anything to eat till a stage was reached many miles further on. I found a small inn where I got a rough-and-ready and not over clean sort of meal, to which however I did ample justice, the keen invigorating air having sharpened up my appetite to the necessary keenness to enable me to swallow what I should have turned up my nose at anywhere in England. "Roughing it" is all very well when one has to do it, but "pigging it" is a very different matter, and in this case was really unnecessary, for I learnt afterwards that there was a really good hotel in the place. Although the mail coach was timed to start within half-an-hour I found that there had not been the slightest necessity to hurry, for it was considerably over an hour before even the first horses for it put in an appearance. Meanwhile the mail bags and the baggage had been stowed away in what did duty for the "boot," on the roof, under the seats—anywhere, in fact, where it could be stowed without risk of falling off. Then it came to the turn of the passengers—amongst whom were several women—all of whom numbered several more than the vehicle was constructed to carry; still, as with the baggage, there was no hesitation. In or out they packed as best they could. Many of them made themselves comfortable seats on the baggage on the roof, from which lofty position they had a fine though chilly view of the surrounding country.

The appearance of the uncouth-looking vehicle can

be better imagined than described; built on the old-fashioned American lines, it reminded me very forcibly of the celebrated Deadwood coach which was so prominent a feature of Buffalo Bill's entertainment in London a few years ago. Perhaps, if anything, it was more battered and ill-constructed, even to the extent of the wheels preventing the doors from opening; there was no attempt even at sashes, a rough bit of canvas on the sides did service for any screen which might be required against the weather.

I had taken the precaution of booking a box seat some days beforehand, and my annoyance can be therefore imagined to find my seat occupied by a gentleman who had already made himself comfortable for the journey, and who evinced no desire to move. My protests at the office at such treatment, however, were met with such cool indifference on the part of the clerk, and it was so evidently a case of *à prendre ou à laisser*, since the coach by this time was only waiting for me, that I decided that it was useless "getting my back up" when the only result would be my being forced to wait till the next day's coach. So I reconnoitred the situation calmly, and soon discovered that a seat was easily and comfortably improvised on the footboard, the back being formed by the knees of the passengers sitting on the seat above, whilst one's feet hung down over the horses. Not at all a bad position, so long as the latter did not take it into their heads to kick—a very remote contingency from the look of them. Into this novel position I with some difficulty clambered, and, with a cracking of the whip and loud good-byes from the passengers to the bystanders, the

lumbering vehicle was started off at the full gallop of its five horses down the rubbly road towards the bush. I was not long in discovering that although I had not got the box seat I had bargained for, I had not in any way lost by it, for my companion, who I afterwards learnt was a Mr. Diamond, one of the most prominent and popular citizens of Freemantle on a short visit to the goldfields, turned out to be as cheery a fellow-traveller and as good a comrade one could wish to meet anywhere. From start to finish his good nature, never-flagging spirits and wonderful stock of anecdotes helped to make the time pass by with wonderful rapidity, and certainly had it not been for him the drive would have been one of trying monotony.

The journey by the "Mail Coach" to Coolgardie is not what might be called a cheap one; £5 per seat for 120 miles on so ramshackle a conveyance, struck me as representing a fair amount of profit on each passenger. I had besides this to disburse four pounds for overweight of baggage, although I had only brought two very ordinary-sized valises, rugs, etc. (my tent equipment and provisions following by waggon). I learnt that several firms ran conveyances to the fields at much lower rates, but the accommodation they offer is of so doubtful a character, and the way they are horsed is usually so indifferent, as to make the journey considerably longer and even more tedious than by the "Mail Coach." It may be imagined how eagerly the advent of the railway was awaited to put a stop to this "fleecing" on the part of the stablemen, who hitherto had practically had it all their own way.

A very few minutes, at the sharp pace we were travel-

ling, were sufficient to see us clear of the township of Southern Cross and out on to the plain which divides it from the bush, and then I began at once to appreciate the delights of coach travelling in Western Australia. To describe the road we were passing over as bad would be to employ a mild word which did not express one's feelings at the moment. A considerable amount of rain had fallen during the past few days, and the ground was in consequence in that condition which is the worst of any—that between dust and wet mud—a sort of pasty state which made the wheels of the lumbering vehicle bury themselves deeply into the sticky surface; and as added to which, trunks of trees, boulders, and other trifling impedimenta plentifully strewed the track, our first half-hour was a lively one and gave one a good foretaste of what might be in store for us later on. This unpleasant state of affairs fortunately was not of long duration; and though the road was never at any time what we might call even a fairly good one, except in the bush, still at intervals we had, so to speak, to "hold on by our eyelids."

The comfort of the passengers, however, depends to a very great extent on the dexterity of the driver, as I soon found, for if driven carefully the coach can nearly always avoid the deep ruts by going as it were astraddle two sets of them. This is called "quartering," and the middle horse of the three leaders of the team is specially trained to keep always in the rut which is being straddled.

From the botanist's point of view the occasional change in the many varieties of "eucalyptus" gum-trees, which appeared to be confined to certain well-

defined zones, or the noticeable absence of the hitherto ever-present "black boy" bush, might perhaps have offered some opportunity for indulging in hypothesis; but to the ordinary observer, once the freshness of novelty worn off, they were to him simply trees, trees, trees as far as the eye could see on all sides; whilst the endless vista of track stretching as straight as a line for miles and miles ahead, hour after hour, has a most depressing effect, which I should imagine is one of the chief results of a sojourn, however brief, in the Australian bush. There are, however, a few distractions which relieved the eye now and again. One thing perhaps which struck me more particularly, was the extraordinary amount of traffic along the whole length of the road, in fact the number of teams we passed during even the first few hours was so exceptional that I remarked as much to the driver, when I learnt to my astonishment that since the big rush to the goldfields, and the consequent establishment of new townships everywhere in the district, business or rather trade has increased to such an enormous extent as to keep in constant employment no less than 700 of these teams, each consisting of a heavy buck-waggon and seven or eight horses. The average time spent on the road is about seven days. All the heavy machinery for the different mines has been carted up in this manner; so when we consider that cartage amounts to £20 per ton in the winter months, and as high as £30 to £35 in the summer, one can realise what it must cost to start a mine and set up a store in these out-of-the-way places; the more especially as in addition to these charges, and the almost prohibitive dues which the

West Australian Government consider it necessary to levy on everything without exception which is brought into a country, which, it should be remembered, is still so much in its infancy as to be unable to support itself even to the extent of the ordinary necessaries of life. It seemed to me that fair trade was all very well in an old-established country, but that such drastic measures as these were calculated to keep a new one in a backward state. We passed at different times many flocks of sheep and herds of cattle being driven slowly up towards the fields. Many of these I learnt die by the way; in fact, we were constantly seeing carcases by the side of the road. The animals, in their eagerness for food, often ate poisoned grasses which kill them in a few minutes. This supply of fresh meat is quite a recent innovation, as up till recently the only food procurable was tinned provisions.

Camel caravans were also frequently met with, and, with their swarthy Afghan drivers attired in Eastern costumes, imparted sudden touches of the picturesque which were quite unexpected. These camels, which are largely imported from India, have been used for many years in this Colony and South Australia, and from long use have become quite acclimatised; in fact, it is said that those born and reared in Australia are stronger and healthier than they are in their native country. Afghans, who are also extensively employed out here as drivers, find the climate suit them well, and earn probably ten times as much as they would in their native fastnesses. It is curious how frightened horses out here are of these camels. Not only did ours, on every occasion that we met a caravan, evince

strong symptoms of bolting, but even the sight of a camel's pack lying on the ground was sufficient to make them prick up their ears and attempt to shy from it.

Want of water, which has always been the bugbear of the Australian bush, is still looked upon as an exceedingly valuable commodity in these parts, in spite of the dams the Government have been building lately all along this route, though the heavy rains which had fallen previous to our arrival had had the effect, however, of filling them all to overflowing, and so considerably lowering the price per gallon. The greatest drawback to the development of the country has, and will always be, the scarcity of fresh water. All the so-called lakes—which, by the way, in summer are only so in name, when they are merely dry sandy flats—are, when full, composed of a liquid so saturated with brine that sea-water would taste sweet in comparison, and the many borings which have been made all over the bush have, in most cases, only tapped subterranean salt springs. The chief drinking-water in use for some time past has been that obtained by condensing this brine; so the value of it may be imagined. At most of the stations we stopped at were notices up—"Water for sale"—though where the Government had got a reservoir near, the profits arising from the sale of condensed water were considerably lessened; in fact, the proprietor of the condenser has to be content with the same price as is paid at the dam, or shut up shop. I visited one of these huge tanks, and found that although the water was somewhat cloudy in appearance, the taste was that of pure

rain-water. The place was about a hundred yards square, and had, I was told, nineteen feet of water in it, which was sold at the following scale of charges, being pumped up, as required, by the caretaker:—

	s.	*d.*
One hundred gallons	2	6
Fifty gallons	1	6
Less than this, ½*d.* per gallon.		
Horses, mules, donkeys, cattle, per head	0	2
Sheep, pigs, at per score, per drink .	0	4
Camels, per drink	0	4
Foot travellers free.		

Twelve months ago, before these dams were constructed, the hundred gallons cost £2 10*s.*, or 6*d.* per gallon—an enormous difference. I was told that in those days the amount horses could drink at 6*d.* per gallon was simply heartbreaking. Artesian water is being actively sought for everywhere, in spite of the opinion of geologists that no such water will ever be found in the Colony.

The post-stations are arranged fifteen to twenty miles apart, and at every one we found five fresh horses waiting for us. At many of these houses food was procurable, in some instances in the shape of a sort of a table-d'hôte meal of a rough description, the usual price for which was from three to four shillings. In consequence, however, of a certain amount of friction or favour between the coach proprietors and the innkeepers, one had to take one's meals as opportunity offered, this, in most cases, affording the passenger considerable inconvenience. As, for instance, when one had breakfasted at 7.30 and was obliged to lunch at 9.30, or else wait on the remote chance of being

able to get a snack at a station we should reach late in the afternoon. Had it not been for the cravings of one's stomach, this arrangement would have afforded a certain amount of amusement. Fortunately, this roughing it, which could have been so easily avoided but for petty jealousies, will soon be ended by the advent of the railway, indications of which we were continually seeing in the shape of gangs of men working hard laying the rails, or filling in embankments—a pleasant sign of approaching civilisation.

Towards evening dark threatening clouds began to cover up the sky all round, whilst the wind gradually rose, and showed signs of increasing to the strength of a gale. We were evidently in for a dirty night, and had got some twenty-four miles to do before we reached our halting-place. Suddenly the rain burst upon us, almost without warning, and for the next two hours it poured with torrential force. The track led across what in the darkness seemed a wide extent of loose sandy plain, though the obscurity was so great it was difficult to distinguish anything; and with the wind driving the rain in one's face it was no easy matter to keep oneself dry, whilst the cold was intense. To add to the discomfort, the jolting and bumping was so great at times as to almost shake one off the coach, the driver, in the darkness, having the greatest difficulty in keeping the track, and we expected at any moment to be overturned. It was with no small feeling of relief that we at length sighted the glimmering of lights on ahead, which heralded welcome shelter and the warmth of a good fire; and a few minutes after we drew up at the door of the only inn

of Barrabin, which, small and rough though it was, to our weary eyes, and after the cold journey, appeared a very picture of comfort. What in these parts might be called a luxurious meal awaited us, to which we did ample justice, for we were quite famished, and after a quiet smoke and a good warm at the fire, we turned in with the intention of having a good night's rest. I had, however, not taken into account the structural peculiarities of a bush inn. I soon learnt them, for I had not long been in bed before a light shone in the room, and I heard voices. To my surprise, I then realised that the whole place was simply made of canvas, and afforded no more privacy than an ordinary tent. So after having, so to speak, assisted at the *coucher* of the travellers in the apartment on one side, I was again awakened when those in an adjoining room decided to retire for the night, and as in each instance they appeared to have reserved all their confidential conversation and family history for this particular occasion, and seemed determined to discuss matters to the fullest extent, it may be imagined that I did not go to sleep quite so soon as I had anticipated. We were all up betimes next morning, as the coach started again at 7.30. Some breakfast had to be got before then, for, in accordance with the usual arrangement, nothing more in the shape of a meal was procurable, so we learnt, till late in the afternoon. There had been a sharp frost during the night, and it was still bitterly cold, so it required a certain amount of energy to leave one's warm blankets, and, after making a hasty sort of toilet of the "lick and promise" order, emerge into the bleak air outside.

As is usually the case out here, even in midwinter, no sooner is the sun up than the warmth of its rays is felt; and shortly after leaving the inn the genial warmth of the bright clear sunshine was sufficient to induce us to discard overcoats and wraps and settle down for the day's journey. Nothing of particular interest occurred during the next few hours. At length, in the distance, we discerned a buggy, drawn by five horses, coming full speed towards us. On either side of it rode two mounted men. As they got nearer we saw that these were troopers of the Colonial police, one of whom also sat near the driver on the box seat. I then learnt that this was the gold escort from Coolgardie, and that covered by the loose sacking in the carriage were cases containing no less than 13,000 ounces of solid gold, on its way from the mining districts to the capital. The driver of our coach vouchsafed this information, and on my expressing surprise at his knowing so exactly the amount, he replied that there was no mystery about it, as the Coolgardie papers always give the information the day before the escort leaves. This led to an interesting chat on the possibilities of a gang of determined bushrangers ever "holding up" the escort and making so big a capture as so many thousand of the precious metal would represent. My fellow-passenger waxed most emphatic in his opinion that with the advent of telegraphy the days of bushrangers were past. When I suggested that such was scarcely the case, considering that we are constantly reading of trains even being held up by bands of desperadoes in America, he pointed out that the physical conditions of the two countries were so

ON THE ROAD TO COOLGARDIE.

vastly different as to scarcely bear comparison; for whereas in America the escape of a fugitive from justice is possible, out here, with the trackless bush on all sides for thousands of miles, and no water or food procurable, no body of men would have any chance of getting away from the Colony, except by the few possible exits. With the telegraph putting the whole police-force immediately on the *qui vive*, what chance would there be of escape? The police all over Australia, he further informed me, worked together with remarkable unison, and so well were all the bad characters known to them, that any movement on their part was at once wired from office to office as occasion might require. As an instance, he went on to tell me a story of what had occurred not long before, when seven of the worst blackguards, or "spielers," as they are called out here in Australia, left Adelaide for Albany by steamer, with the intention of proceeding to the goldfields. No sooner had they arrived than their every movement was shadowed, and they little imagined that by the time they had reached Perth they were as well known to the police as if they had lived all their lives in the Colony. They had since reached Coolgardie, and although it was supposed that their intention was one day to attempt to rob the escort, the police were confident that they were quite able to frustrate this. Any suspicious movements on the part of the band would cause them all to be arrested without any hesitation. Against such admirable organisation as this, no possible combination could be effective. As though, however, to throw some doubt on all this, our driver, a short distance further, pointed out to us a

place which he told me had often been spoken of by the escort as the spot where they would be "held up" one day, and which they were always somewhat shy of in consequence. The place, which was simply a sort of natural clearing in the bush caused by an "outcrop" of granite rocks, appeared certainly the sort of position which would be chosen for such a purpose, and if held by half-a-dozen desperate ruffians, armed with Winchesters, the escort would not, I thought, have half a chance for their lives.

It seems somewhat curious that in a country where, as I have before mentioned, the importation of every necessary of life is almost prohibitively taxed, such unnecessary and unwelcome things as notorious "spielers" should be allowed free access. In England and other old countries, it is almost an impossible matter to stop such immigration; but in a new country such as Western Australia, there should be no difficulty whatever in refusing the permission to land, to men whom the police have been advised are "dangerous characters," and not intent on any good. Such a measure has, I learn, been recently inaugurated in New Zealand in the case of undesirable immigrants, and although it has created a lot of controversy in the other colonies, has undoubtedly had a salutary effect as far as New Zealand itself is concerned.

The confidence displayed by the inhabitants of the bush was well illustrated by a roadside letter-box we passed during the afternoon. It consisted simply of an old wooden box, such as might have been used for packing tinned provisions in, nailed to a post. In the front of it was roughly written, "20 mile letter-

box." There was no lid or safeguard of any sort—yet into this primitive receptacle our driver dropped several letters. Their owners, who had stations round about, would probably be passing that way during the course of the day, and would find them, if they thought of looking, so our driver explained.

As afternoon grew into evening, and we gradually neared our destination, no sign whatever betokened the proximity of what is probably at the present moment the largest mining camp in the world. The bush continued as dense as ever, and the road, if anything, became rougher. Our horses went jogging along with methodical precision, and we had all begun to have enough of it, and to wish the driver would try and hurry up, but that he did not seem inclined to do, when all of a sudden one of the passengers on the roof called out to him that another conveyance was coming along behind us, and catching us up. This was sufficient to rouse our Jehu into unexpected activity. To look round and grasp the fact was the work of an instant, when he immediately lashed his horses into a smart gallop. As we went bumping and bounding over all obstacles, we were too excited by the exhilarating motion and the prospect of a "race," to wind up the journey with, to notice the risks we ran of being overturned. One would never have imagined such speed could have been got out of such a lumbering old vehicle. Meanwhile, the other driver was gaining slowly, for as soon as he realised it was a race we wished, he urged his own horses into a hard gallop. A turn in the road, in a few minutes, brought us in sight of our destination, standing in the centre of a bare,

treeless plain. The race from this point became more exciting than ever. It was a Sunday evening, and as both vehicles dashed at full speed up the broad street which was crowded with strollers, the sensation was certainly a pleasant and inspiriting one, and a distinctly novel *finale* to the tedious journey.

CHAPTER VII.

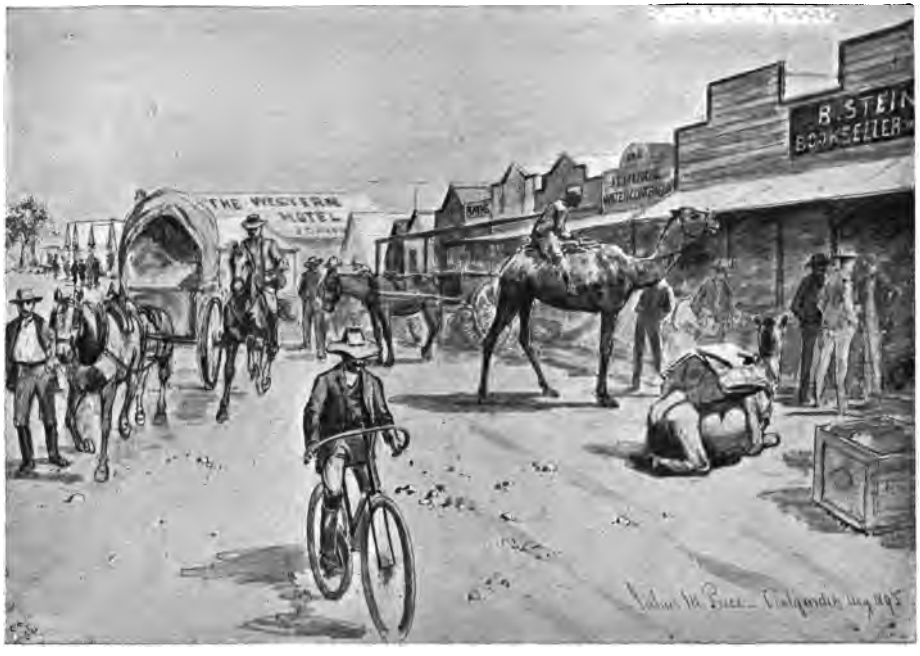
COOLGARDIE.

The Victoria Hotel at Coolgardie—Stores and shops in Bayley Street—Bustle and activity in the town—Lodgings and food—The "Bayley" Mine—"Reward Claims"—History of Bayley's find—The mineral wealth of Western Australia—The "dry-blower"—Groups of "chums" sinking prospecting shafts—The miner's life at Coolgardie—False rumours of "finds"—Bicycle-riding on the goldfields—The "Open Call" Stock Exchange—Amusements and drinking saloons in Coolgardie—Lack of water.

I ALWAYS consider that it is a good plan, if it can be managed, to arrive in a new place after dark, more especially if at the end of a tiring journey, for then one gets one's first and best impressions in the early morning, after a good night's rest, and with one's brain clear and refreshed. Although I had been prepared to find a decent hotel to put up at from all I had heard of the wonderful strides Coolgardie has made during the past six months, still I must confess that the large well-built "Victoria Hotel," where I soon found myself, more than realised what I had anticipated. It was difficult to believe that where this big, well-lighted and comfortably furnished hostelerie stood, was, only a very few months before my arrival, unopened bush such as we had been passing through for the past two days on the coach. I had wired for a room, but the

place was crammed, as was the case with every other hotel, so I had to put up with very limited quarters, which was rather disappointing, and somewhat upset my plans, as I had decided to make Coolgardie my headquarters for a time, using it as a sort of base of operation whilst making excursions to the different places of interest in the vicinity.

The change from Perth was at once noticeable, and made one feel that here indeed was that essential vitality which is always a forerunner of prosperity. I was up betimes next morning, anxious to have a look at the famous township; nor was this first glimpse a disappointing one, for if the streets looked animated on the previous evening, in the early morning in the cheerful sunlight they appeared doubly so. On all sides were evidences of a bustle and hurry which proved that the Coolgardie people were not here for pleasure, but business. The main street, which is called after the lucky finder of the first gold in the neighbourhood, Bayley, is a very wide thoroughfare, and when the shops and stores on either side, at present constructed of corrugated iron, are rebuilt in brick and stone, as they undoubtedly will be some day, it will present a very imposing appearance; as it is, it looks very squat and unfinished, in fact much the same as, though on a larger scale than, all the new bush townships. Still these stores, in their very newness, gave to my mind a certain amount of character to the street, and with the heaps of packing cases and goods in front of them, and their large name boards overhead, imparted an idea of "big business," which is quite in keeping with a rough though successful mining camp,



BAYLEY STREET, COOLGARDIE.

for such it is in reality. The dusty roadway crowded with teams, camel caravans, buggies, horsemen and bicyclists, made up quite an inspiriting scene. A stroll round soon opened my eyes to the fact that there were few things one could not buy in Coolgardie, almost every description of shops (except fishmongers) being found in Bayley Street, yet scarcely a year ago only a few tents, and perhaps a dozen rough iron huts, represented what is now so thriving a community. Many relics of those times are still to be seen, and their very rudeness helps still more forcibly to convince one of the marvellous change which has taken place since they were erected. It was amusing to note the simple manner in which their proprietors had sought in those primitive days to combine under one small roof one or more trades of the most opposite, and often incongruous natures, not knowing which of them might prove most successful, and evidently not caring to put all their eggs into one basket. Such as, for instance, a shop which was a confectioner's and a hairdresser's—or a "restaurant" and a "laundry," the idea evidently being that the rough miner is not a fastidious mortal. Now all these shanties, standing as they do on ground which in those days cost a mere song, are now worth almost their weight in gold, so rapidly has the value of land anywhere in the township gone up since the gold rush. Although lodgings are as a rule dear, actual living is not so expensive as might be imagined, and "tucker," as food is here expressively denominated, is to be obtained at various boarding-houses at extremely low prices, considering that fresh meat and vegetables were until quite recently unknown quantities up here.

Of course, up to the present, the bulk of the population, consisting as it does of miners or mining labourers and small diggers, has been a floating one, being as it were here to-day and off to-morrow, according to the demand for labour in the neighbouring mines, or the returns of the alluvial fields round the town. So it has often happened that where there was a sudden

GOING FOR A RIDE.

rumour of a "big find" anywhere on the various "fields," the exodus was so great as to almost empty the place for a time. With, however, the gradual development of the different mining districts, and the leasing and therefore closing up of the hitherto open grounds, the population is slowing settling down, and in a short time these birds of passage will probably have flitted for good and all, and left the place to

develop quietly and steadily. All this not unnaturally excited state of affairs must calm down, and give place to steady and matter-of-fact commerce, and Coolgardie will become, as it were, the great emporium of the Western Australian goldfields.

Of course what naturally attracts one first after a cursory look round the town is the big mining district within a few hundred yards of the main street. The nearest mine is that called after its finder "Bayley," and is situated on the plot of ground which, in accordance with a custom in these parts, is always given by the Government free to the lucky discoverer of the first lode of the precious metal in a new district. These "Reward Claims" are quite a feature in all the various mining areas round here, and have quite an element of romance attaching to them in consequence, in most instance, of the extraordinary and unexpected manner of their discovery. To the sensational find of what is known as Bayley's mine the foundation of the town of Coolgardie was due.

In the case of the finder of one of the richest mines in the Colony—he had been out prospecting in the bush for a very long time without success, and was returning to Perth almost disconsolate—one evening on his way he encamped for the night within a few hundred yards of where the important township now stands, then a howling wilderness. A horse he had with him got restless during the night and commenced kicking and plunging about. The man went to quiet the animal when, whilst doing so, he knocked his foot against what he at first took to be a big stone, but which on examination he found, to his

astonishment, to be a huge and almost solid mass of pure gold. To "peg" out his claim did not take long, and within four weeks six men working with the roughest tools raised five hundred ounces of gold, worth nearly £10,000. The rush which followed this sensational find was the commencement of Coolgardie. The lack of water during the ensuing summer months drove many of the diggers back again to Southern Cross, which was at this time a rather promising field, but several managed somehow to exist through the hot months and were highly successful, though not to the extent of Bayley, whose find proved to be one of the richest ever made in Australia, and has made quite an historic record amongst the mining annals of the world.

Curiously enough until comparatively recently, this portion of the Australian Continent was considered to be absolutely without mineral deposit of any value, only a few small finds of copper and lead having been previously made. The enormously rich discoveries which have already rewarded prospectors, and the new ones which are being announced almost every day, have however completely upset all the theories of the geologists; and all now points to the fact that Western Australia is literally teeming with the precious metal and that gold-bearing reef and rich alluvial deposits extend the whole length of the Colony.

I do not propose giving an account of the geological conditions under which gold is found in this part of Australia, nor to detail the many processes by which it is extracted from its quartz or alluvial surroundings, for to give even a slight *résumé* of the technicalities of

these intricate branches of the mining engineer's profession, would require far more space than is at my disposal, forming as they do a complete study in themselves, and the practice of which is to a great extent based upon the conditions of the country operated on. Round about Coolgardie all sorts and conditions of mining are to be seen: the "dry-blower," with his rough

DRY-BLOWERS.

primitive method of "winnowing," as it were, the alluvial ground; the big mine, run by the rich English syndicate, with its steam power and many heads of batteries; whilst here and there may also be seen little groups of "chums" sinking prospecting shafts, which, if they are lucky, they may one day be able to sell to the representatives of some big English financiers who are always waiting about Coolgardie and the various

other promising fields on the chance of something good turning up. As of course, in most instances, the prospecting might have to be continued for many long months without the smallest paying result, many of these small groups of "chums" divide up, so I learnt, and whilst some of the party continue working on at the shaft, the others get work in some neighbouring mine and send half their wages to keep their friends going and to continue the developing of the claim. Considering that good experienced miners can earn as much as £4 per week, it is possible by such an arrangement to easily keep a camp together; for actual prospecting costs nothing after the initial outlay for tools, etc., and living in the bush is cheap.

That all however is not gold that glitters, even at Coolgardie, one is not long in realising very forcibly; the shortest stroll amongst these smaller fry of workers being sufficient to convince one that even where gold is plentifully distributed over the country, every gold miner is not necessarily a favourite of fortune and that many of these patient plodding workers are often in the most straitened circumstances. Yet on they drudge week after week—working with a mechanical sort of precision which is the outcome of long habit—always hoping that the next shovelful will bring them the long-waited luck, but which in so few cases ever comes. Fortune is indeed a fickle dame and is most capricious in her choice of favourites, so it is far more often than not that the big "finds" fall to those who have hardly scratched for them, whilst in most cases the aching heart is the only result of much hard labour. I chatted with many of these solitary workers, most of

A DRY-BLOWER.

whom seemed pleased at the chance of a little relaxation, and learnt that, unless exceptionally lucky, an average of about eighteen to twenty-five shillings per week was the very most that they generally earned, or rather found, and this only at the cost of continuous work from sunrise to sunset. Of course, however, it is most difficult to get any more than an approximate idea of what these dry-blowers make, as they may sometimes be days without seeing a particle of "colour," and then perhaps make up for lost time with a tidy sized nugget, which helps to keep them going for another rough spell. Yet most of the alluvial workings around Coolgardie and its neighbouring "fields" have been "dry blown" over and over again till one would think scarcely a pebble had been left unturned, and every new-comer still has a go at them till the ground looks as though it were covered everywhere with enormous ant-heaps and newly dug graves—graves which needed no headstone to remind one that many hopes and much labour had been buried there.

It is scarcely possible to give any adequate idea of the state of feverish excitement to which the news of a new "find" arouses the small prospectors and diggers. Scarcely waiting even to verify the information, and even in many cases without taking the trouble to ascertain the exact whereabouts of the new "field," off they go as best they can, no matter what the distance. Some in carts with their goods and chattels, others on horseback—or on bicycles—more often than not on foot, "humping their swag," as the action is termed when a wayfarer carries his worldly belongings on his back, till the road presents the appearance of

a general exodus of the whole population. Most extraordinary tales are told of the enormous distance thus covered, in the generality of cases only to end in disappointment, for hoaxes of this cruel sort have been not infrequently played on these simple diggers. Whilst I was in Coolgardie, a man returned from one of these "rushes;" he had done over one thousand miles on his bicycle through unexplored bush, down as far as Israelite Bay and back, without so much as hearing of the reported "big alluvial find" again after leaving the town. The appearance he presented was most pitiable, and bore eloquent testimony to the hardships he had gone through; though, strangely enough, his bicycle was comparatively uninjured. I learnt that on one occasion he had been three days without food.

It may be mentioned that bicycle riding on the fields has attained such proportions, that a service of express riders has been organised to carry letters and telegrams to the most distant and inaccessible parts of the country. These messengers, who are necessarily splendid riders and men of excellent stamina, cover the longest distance in wonderful time, and make quite good incomes by this means. The average charge for each letter or telegram was two shillings, but special messages come to a very much larger amount, and consequently these men will frequently earn as much as ten pounds in a week.

One of the principal features of Coolgardie, and one which struck me as being quite unique, was the evening "open call" Stock Exchange, which was held in the hall of the large building just erected by the London

and Western Australia Exploration Company. I walked in by chance after dinner one evening without knowing what was going on, and was much surprised when I learnt that the rough unkempt crowd of men I saw

THE OPEN CALL EXCHANGE, COOLGARDIE.

around me, most of whom did not look worth a shilling, were engaged in buying or selling shares in the various mines of the district, and that in this manner the market price of the stock was often made. Though the Coolgardie official Stock Exchange did not recog-

nise this sort of *petite bourse*, still the transactions on the "open call" change have often a marked effect on it.

Coolgardie is not yet well off for amusements—a rough sort of hall is occasionally used for musical entertainments, and there are one or two fairly good clubs; but after dark the resources for helping one to while away the time are as yet not numerous, considering what a lot of money there is to be spent amongst the crowd in town after working hours, with the result that the drinking saloons and billiard-rooms are doing a roaring trade. In fact the thirst which the now famous Coolgardie dust induces is making the fortunes of many a publican, and the daily takings at many a small bar sufficientiy proving this, £60 to £70 being not an unusual average. That great drawback to this part of the Colony, want of water, has naturally been felt more here than elsewhere, and as a consequence sanitation has been up till quite recently *non est* in the township, with the result that a malignant form of colonial fever, presenting many of the characteristics of typhoid, was very prevalent during the hot months of last summer. The establishment of Government water condensers and the recent election of a mayor, and an energetic municipal board, promises however to soon alter this unhealthy state of affairs in the town itself, though it will probably be many years before the outlying camps, where pure water is almost unobtainable, will be entirely free from the annual visitation.*

* Appendix D.

THE "HOMESTEAD," HAMPTON PLAINS.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HAMPTON PLAINS.

Life in Coolgardie during the summer months—Description of the Hampton Plains Estate—Indigenous plants—Artesian water on the estate.

I WAS fortunate in reaching Coolgardie in the winter time, for during the summer the heat is intense, and myriads of flies make life almost unbearable. Almost every day a strong wind blows, carrying with it clouds of a pestilential dust which penetrates everywhere, and in no small degree helps to spread the germs of fever and other diseases. In fact the many drawbacks and risks attending life in Coolgardie, during the summer months, would soon scare away all its inhabitants were it not for the overwhelming attraction of its surrounding goldfields.

It was undoubtedly partly with this knowledge that the Hampton Plains Estate—a big English syndicate whose vast property, covering an area of 1,250,000 acres, and reaching to within two miles of Coolgardie—are laying out a portion of their estate for suburban villas as residences in summer; and there can be no doubt that this scheme will prove of the utmost value to Coolgardie. For, although only two miles from the

town itself, it escapes all the evil dust which makes life a burden; and the picturesque surroundings are such as will make it a charmingly healthy retreat at all times from the busy centre. A scheme of tramways connecting the two places has been already prepared, and the tract marked out in readiness for the lines. The surroundings of Coolgardie itself are so monotonous and tame that it was a most pleasant surprise to find quite delightful scenery so near at hand, and I spent a most enjoyable day on the estate. Although at the time of my visit very little of the bungalow village was ready, still one could easily judge how fine the effect would be when the whole of the scheme had been carried out. The surrounding bush in this district differs very considerably from any other I had passed through, presenting here and there to the eye most charming glimpses. It was almost like a peep at far-away Devonshire, and very refreshing indeed after the hideous tedium of the wilderness we had seen so much of. It is said that there exists in Western Australia no less than 3700 different species of indigenous plants, and to my mind all of these appeared to be represented in Hampton Plains; for I do not think I ever saw a more startling show of wild flowers and shrubs, a wonderful testimony to the fertility of the soil, so much so that it appears extraordinary that this part of the country should have remained so long untouched. Other districts where the soil is almost barren one can understand it, but here is a magnificent tract of land absolutely waiting to be cleared and put to some useful purpose. Here, also, abound trees of every variety, from the

PIONEERS OF CIVILISATION.

beautiful "salmon-gum" and elegant "gimlet-wood tree" to the graceful acacias, myalls, sandal-wood, and the thousand and one others equally beautiful and flowering.

Beneath one's feet lay possibly untold wealth only waiting to be developed. That this quiescent state of affairs is at length approaching its end, and that these solitudes are to be shortly invaded by man, was however evident, for I came across several small encampments which I learnt were those of mining prospectors, and was told that they were hard at work following up indications which proved beyond a doubt the existence of gold in the immediate neighbourhood; whilst a little further afield I saw the busy works of a large diamond bore drilling for artesian water. The obtaining of artesian water will be of inestimable value to the district for many miles around. That these boring operations will be successful there can scarcely be a doubt. Geologists have been so completely wrong in most of their theories with reference to Western Australia, that their opinions are hardly worth taking into account; for it will be remembered that it was stated that no gold could exist in the entire colony, and now it promises to become the biggest goldfield in the world. With reference to artesian water a similar statement was made, yet with my own eyes I saw a powerful stream bubbling forth merrily not a hundred miles from Coolgardie. It is perhaps a pity this should be so, as it upsets many old-fashioned and interesting theories; but at the same time it is pleasing to see the newer generation boldly advance and endeavour to cut out a way for them-

selves. The company the Hampton Plains belong to are evidently imbued with these ideas, which will have the effect of opening up this valuable tract of country, and I feel sure that their example could be advantageously followed in many other parts of this bush-covered continent.

CHAPTER IX.

"HANNANS."

The drive to Hannans from Coolgardie—Account of the Hannans mining camp—How to acquire a mining-lease—Cost of labour at the fields—A visit to the workings of the "Hannans Brownhill" and the "Great Boulder" gold mines.

AMONGST the many interesting excursions I made round about Coolgardie, undoubtedly one which I made to the famous goldfield of Kalgourlie, or "Hannans," as it is now called, was the one which impressed me most.

It is a twenty-four mile drive from one town to the other, the road presenting what I may call the usual features, and being as dreary and monotonous as ever. At the kind invitation of the warden of the district, Mr. Jephson, I spent a few days in his camp, which is pleasantly situated a short distance from town, on the side of a low hill.

"Hannans," though probably destined to become very soon a most important place, was at the time of my visit (August 16th, 1895) in its embryo stage of existence. There were very few houses or stores of any importance, though building operations were in full swing, and there was not a foot of ground unsold in the whole of the townsite area.

All this wonderful energy, and the influx of inhabitants to a district which is scarcely two years old, is attributed directly to the phenomenal good-fortune of the now far-famed mines, the "Boulder" and the "Hannans Brownhill."

Every mining-lease for seven miles round these two celebrated "finds" was taken up. Even the smallest

HANNANS.

piece of ground sufficient to sink a shaft on was at the time of my visit worth a "Bishop's Ransom."

The word "gold" seems to ring in one's ears all day at Hannans, for every part of the district, even to the very ground the houses are built upon, appears to be teeming with the precious metal, and one hears on all sides stories of the wonderful "finds" that are being daily and hourly made; perhaps one of the most curious of these finds being that of a man who, when off work on a Sunday, was inspired with the lucky idea to prospect

under the ground of his own tent. He did so with the most startling result. So much so, in fact, that in a very short time his tent became the centre of hundreds of claims, for in his excitement he gave the secret away before he had time to peg out his own claim, so his entire property only consisted of what was covered by his tent.

From week end to week end, with the exception of Sundays (though why there should be any off-day is inexplicable, since the god of the country is "gold"), the incessant digging goes on, whilst one is startled out of one's sleep in the dead of night by the deep booming of dynamite-charges as they are exploded far away below in the bowels of the earth, or the hoarse screech of some steam-whistle calling in the night shifts.

The process of acquiring a claim is more complicated than may be imagined. Some one applies to the registrar of the nearest township, who, on his paying a pound, gives him a miner's right. Then he begins prospecting. If he comes upon a likely spot he commences "dollying"—that is, he breaks up the quartz with a sort of pestle and mortar, and washes away the stone and earth. If the "find" seems likely to be a profitable one, the miner pegs out his claim of so many acres, and applies to the warden for his certificate, paying at the same time his year's rent of one pound per acre, and a survey fee of one pound per acre. In some districts as many as 1500 to 2000 claims have been registered in three weeks. Well, if the claim is a good one—and on the slightest rumour he is carefully watched—hundreds follow him. The method of pegging-out is simplicity itself. When you find the

supposed payable reef, you cut down a tree, and make a long peg and stick it in the ground; then you cut an L-trench and pace off the distance to the next angle of your claim, and stick in another peg, completing the same way the parallelogram of land you desire to acquire. Labour is exceedingly expensive. The average pay is £4 a week, with an allowance of two gallons of water per day. And the worst of it is that the supply of labour is rather intermittent. In many cases,

STORES FOR THE CAMP.

directly a man makes £30 or £40, off he goes prospecting "on his own." Then the labour conditions are very stringent and severe. Every three acres must be worked by at least one man, and should, through dearth of labour or otherwise, a claim be neglected for two days, it may be "jumped," that is, a plaint may be lodged against the owner for breach of the labour laws, and work will then have to be suspended till the case is heard. If the case is proved the complainant

acquires the plot. Some persons make quite a harvest out of watching such opportunities, and so exacting blackmail. Of course no registrar would listen to a plaint against one of the big mines unless the applicant were a man of substance. Work is carried on night and day all the week round by three shifts of men. It will be seen, therefore, that the conditions of acquiring a mining-lease in Western Australia are excessively onerous and expensive.

That Hannans is the richest goldfield ever yet discovered, and the "Hannans Brownhill" and the "Great Boulder" the two biggest gold mines the world is likely to see, there cannot be a shadow of doubt. It is no question of Stock Exchange, or the market price of shares, when it comes to digging out, day by day, ore which seems to consist almost entirely of gold. There are, of course, many other very successful claims here, for the ground appears to be underlaid with rich reef, but these two mines have attracted so vast an amount of attention lately, that an account of a visit to them will doubtless be of interest. Situated at a distance of about a mile and a half from the town, the two leases almost touch, which probably accounts for both presenting identical features. The road, which has only quite recently been cut through the bush, is already a broad and well-worn one, for crowds of curious sightseers have made excursions along it for the purpose of feasting their eyes on the lucky spots. In fact, so great a traffic has sprung up that an excursion waggonette runs daily between the town and these mines. A small charge is made for visiting the underground workings, and is handed over to the Hannans Hospital

Fund, a very good idea indeed, and which, I was told, is bringing in a nice little amount per week. Such a state of affairs is, I believe, unprecedented, and has never before occurred in the history of any mine in the Colony. All along the road from the town one passes indications of the hidden wealth below in the shape of the many shafts which are being sunk, whilst at the corner of every side track there is a sign-post indicating the property it leads to.

Many of these promising claims I learnt are being amalgamated by a big London syndicate to be known as the Hannans Proprietary Mining Company, the general opinion out here being that it will create quite a sensation as soon as it gets to work. It is as curious a sight as can be imagined, and makes one wonder how many other parts of the country are equally rich in mineral wealth, still untrodden by man, which are only waiting to be discovered by some lucky individual to become equally busy and animated. In the opinion of experienced miners, there are many hundreds of thousands of square miles which will be opened up some day.

I decided to pay my first visit to the "Hannans Brownhill," as it was situated nearest the town. I found, however, that I had chosen a bad time, for the place was encumbered with machinery and building materials, and the works being in course of erection every one seemed too busy to receive visitors. I was, however, most courteously received by the manager, Mr. Varden. "I regret," he said, noticing me glance round, "that I have so little ready to show you above ground, we have been so terribly handicapped by the

difficulties of getting our machinery up from the railway that we have not yet been able to begin crushing, though I hope to do so during the course of the next few months." Accepting his invitation to stroll round, I could not fail to be interested in all I was shown. Water, which has always hitherto been the burning question in the successful development of Western Australian mines, will evidently not mar the prospects in this mine, for only oil engines are to be used, and, for the extraction of the gold, a roller process is to be employed, which has been most successfully used in South America and South Africa. Not only is the amount of water required reduced to a minimum, but the usual loss of the very fine gold is also prevented.

Round the main shaft over which the timbers for the hoisting gear were being erected, I saw several thousand tons of stone being continuously hauled up from below, this curiously coloured earthy-looking rubble being the same that has made the fortune of the "Boulder," and will undoubtedly do the same for the "Hannans Brownhill" as soon as crushing can be begun, for this rubble is full of fine gold. In fact, there was no difficulty in verifying this, as I soon discovered by picking up a lump and examining it with a magnifying glass. It is curious to note the confidence which is displayed at these mines, and how, as it were, "familiarity breeds contempt;" for everywhere I went I saw the valuable stone left lying just as it came up the shaft, and it was chucked out of the bags as though it was so much rubbish, without any one to watch it even at night. It is so well known that a delinquent would have summary justice meted out to him if he was caught stealing from

a mine, that the fear of this acts as a strong deterrent, though undoubtedly a lot of pilfering does take place all the same. I had the strongest proof of the enormous value of the ore at that moment being extracted from the mine when I was shown the "Specimens," which

THE HORSE "WHIM," HANNANS BROWNHILL.

are always brought out for the edification of visitors. These are usually kept in the manager's safe. At the Hannans Brownhill all the ground worked on is so rich that nearly every bagful contains a splendid specimen. The result of this is that a special storehouse has had to be put aside for their safe housing under lock and

key. In this, at the time of my visit, there must have been twenty or thirty tons of almost pure gold!

After a good walk round on the surface, the manager suggested a visit to the workings below, an invitation which I readily accepted, as this was what I really most wanted to see. So some candles were procured, and I followed my guide to the mouth of the shaft. The cage was not yet in working order, so we had to make the descent, which was of about 200 feet, by means of the ladders, not an operation necessitating any particular aptitude for gymnastics, as they went in easy flights all the way down as far as the 100-foot level. Here I stopped to have a look round. On all sides were to be seen the glimmering lights of the candles of the miners, whilst the sound of pick and shovel in the surrounding obscurity made up a weird impression which long remained on one's mind. I then made an interesting tour through what appeared in the darkness to be almost interminable tunnels, stopping here and there to examine rich patches in the walls or roof, where the gold could be seen glistening on the face of the decomposed ironstone, or schist, of which the valuable lode is composed, though I fear my ignorance of geology was too great for me to fully appreciate the wonders around me. At last we reached another shaft which led to the lower level, and down which went a perpendicular ladder. This was to me a somewhat trying experience, but having got so far I could not well back out, so I followed down after my guide. It seemed as though we were never going to reach the bottom, and all the time I was thinking how on earth I should ever manage to climb up again.

However, at last we got down, and found ourselves in a small narrow drive which had been just commenced. The heat was intense, and after my unusual bit of exercise it took me some few minutes to pull myself together. One solitary miner was working down here, and the place was so small that there was scarcely room for us to stand in it. On looking round casually at the man as he drove in his pick with rhythmical precision my eyes were attracted by a peculiar glint in the rocky walls around him. "Look closer," said Mr. Varden, noticing my attention. I did so, when I was astonished to find that the whole place was positively sparkling with gold. I had often pictured to myself what a gold mine would be like, but in my wildest dreams I had never imagined anything to equal this. The man must have knocked out at least a hundred pounds' worth of ore during the few minutes I had been watching him in this veritable Aladdin's Cave. It absolutely made my mouth water to take up some of the lumps of stone lying loosely at my feet, whilst I could not help trying to realise the feelings of this poor digger, finding himself quite alone and surrounded by all this untold wealth which he was getting out for the benefit of others, whilst he himself was only earning £3 10*s.* per week! The moral courage which is necessary to enable a man to thus resist temptation and still remain an honest man must be indeed of an altogether exceptional nature.

As we made our way up again my mind was so full of what I had seen that the steepness of the ladder passed unnoticed, and as we walked back through the upper level I could not refrain from

MAIN SHAFT, GREAT BOULDER MINE.

mentioning to the manager the subject uppermost in my thoughts.

"I never put any but the most reliable of the men to work in places where the lode is exceptionally rich," he told me in reply to my query; "and every particle of the ore is carefully put into special bags and sent up immediately to the surface direct to me, for it is not necessary to put temptation into the men's way, although such rich lodes are often come upon so suddenly as to take one unawares, as it were. You see," he added, "there is absolutely no possibility of checking what is found, as one cannot put an overseer over each man. We must therefore trust them a great deal, although at times they are left by themselves in what is often a very Bank of England in itself, as you have just seen."

It was with a feeling of relief that I reached the bright sunshine again, for to one unaccustomed to the gloom of a mine the sensation it creates is at first of an indescribably depressing and suffocating nature, though certainly in this case the wonders I had seen somewhat lessened the unpleasant feeling.

I had still the Boulder Mine to see; so, thanking my guide for his courtesy, I proceeded on my way. A few hundred yards along the road brought me in sight of the little township which has sprung up round the mine. The busy scene was a startling one withal, and reminded me very much of an English north-country mining village, many of the cottages being built of wood heightening the illusion. The Boulder, having been developed so much longer than the "Hannans Brownhill," naturally presented a much more active

appearance, more especially as it has the advantage of having the battery of an adjoining mine to put its ore through pending the erection of its own plant. The continuous din of the many stamps, the dull roar of engines, the hissing of escaping steam, and the hammering of saw-mills, made to my ears almost sweet music after the silence of the bush. What, I thought, will be the effect when the entire district for miles round is covered, as it undoubtedly will be, with such works, for all the big proprietors are busy putting up their machinery. I had no difficulty in getting an order to view the mine, the half-sovereign for the Hannans Hospital being the necessary "open sesame." Before going down, the manager (as usual) showed me some of the latest specimens. These, however, were so exactly alike what I had just seen at the Hannans Brownhill, that it was difficult to work oneself up into a second state of enthusiasm; moreover, I was beginning to get satiated with the sight of so much gold. I remarked as much to the manager, who seemed somewhat surprised at my apparent lack of appreciation; but, on learning where I had just come from, he appeared to realise my reticence. "Yes," he said, agreeing with me, "the Brownhill will undoubtedly be the next big sensation, for they are on the same line as we are." After this I felt I could look round without having to worry about comparatives and superlatives, as was the case at the other mine, where in a few minutes I had completely exhausted my vocabulary.

The cage was not ready here either, so we again had to make the descent by the ladders: the description I have just given of the Hannans Brownhill will suffice

for the Boulder also, except that the latter, at the time of my visit, was in a more advanced state of development, and appeared to be almost overcrowded with diggers. I was shown round the workings by the captain of the mine, a genial old fellow named Dunstan, a typical specimen of his class, and of so cheery a disposition that I wondered whether it was passing his days in such a mine, and the knowing that he was, in a measure, helping to make so many fortunes (for

THE PRINTING AND PUBLISHING OFFICES OF THE "WESTERN ARGUS," HANNANS.

others), had anything to do with this lively temperament. There is a certain sameness about a mine which, once the novelty worn off, as it soon does, rather palls on one. So, although I was very much interested on being shown the immensely valuable ore which was being, as it were, dug out on all sides, and explained the splendid formation of the lode, I was not sorry to reach the surface once more, as climbing about like these tours of inspection necessitates, is fatiguing, to say the least of it.

I made a somewhat hasty inspection of the smelting-room and the batteries, for time was getting short. The process of crushing and extraction of the gold by the mercury-covered plates was explained, though the technicalities of the various processes were of so complicated a nature as to hardly come within the comprehension of a tyro like myself. Some heavy ingots of the precious metal, which represented the previous week's crushing, were much more comprehensible in their brilliant impressiveness. As I drove back to the town, whilst evening was coming on, and pondered over all I had been shown, I felt that I had that afternoon seen two of the new wonders of the world.

CHAPTER X.

A TEN MINUTES' CHAT WITH HERR SCHMEISSER AT KALGOURLIE.

Visit of Herr Schmeisser to "Hannans"—His opinion on the gold-fields of Western Australia.

HERR SCHMEISSER.

THERE has, perhaps, been no greater or more important indication of the influence the recent discoveries of gold in Western Australia are likely to have on the monetary conditions of the world than is afforded by the visit to the Colony of the great German geological expert, Herr Schmeisser, the Royal Councillor of Mines of Berlin. Herr Schmeisser's position was that of an expert, appointed to examine and report on the fields in general, with a view to ultimately expressing his opinion as to their durability. It is, therefore, not surprising that when it became known that the distinguished savant had been specially authorised by his Government to publish, in official book form, the results

of his investigations, the great capitalist groups of London, Paris and Berlin should have watched his progress from camp to camp with an interest, which, although not perhaps of a scientific character, at any rate showed what they thought might depend upon the results of his tour. Indeed, it is now pretty well known that the development in the South African gold mines was in a large measure directly attributable to the highly favourable report which was the result of Herr Schmeisser's visit to that Colony some two years ago, at the direction of his Government. His report on that occasion, it may be added, has been amply corroborated by the present condition of the various mines. It therefore goes almost without saying that an equally favourable verdict on the Western Australian goldfields will have the effect of attracting, not only a great number of settlers, but also a vast amount of capital to the Colony, both from London and the various continental centres; and that this will undoubtedly be the case is in a great measure already proved, it having in some way leaked out, in spite of the fact that Herr Schmeisser's report is not yet completed, that his opinion is likely to be of an extremely favourable character.

Whilst at Kalgourlie I had several opportunites of meeting the great scientist, for he was staying with the manager of the Hannans Brownhill Mine, Mr. Varden, and I was a pretty frequent guest of that gentleman and his charming wife. Meeting him in this way under Mr. Varden's hospitable roof, I had many opportunities for informal chats with him on the subject of his mission.

I found Herr Schmeisser singularly unassuming and modest, and an entirely different man to what, before making his acquaintance, I had pictured him to be. Instead of the blue-spectacled, round-shouldered, grey-haired savant, so typical of the student of the Father-land, I found myself being presented to a handsome, soldierly-looking man, in the prime of life, and active and alert in appearance, with absolutely nothing of the pedant about him; while the cheery look on his fine Saxon countenance made one feel that to know him would be to like him.

Whilst driving one day from Hannans to the mine, before Herr Schmeisser had completed his tour of the fields, it occurred to me that an "interview" could be obtained without his realising the design, and I forthwith proceeded to carry out my fell purpose. Possibly it was my extremely elementary knowledge of the German language, combined with my obvious desire to express more than I was able to—to say nothing of the natural modesty which is one of my chief characteristics—that induced the councillor to take compassion on me and reply to me at more length than he probably would have done had he guessed my purpose. He had proved himself to be an exceedingly reticent man, and if it occurred to him that, under the guise of an ordinary chat, his opinions were being obtained on the mines, he would say little indeed. Still, on this particular occasion he was somewhat communicative, though I am afraid that much of his conversation was lost to me, as he spoke in his own language. "What was the title of your book on the South African gold-fields?" I hazarded, by way of making a start.

"'Ueber Verkomen und Zerrinnung der wichtigeren nutzbaren mineralischen Bodenschätze in der Südafricanischer Republik unter besondter Beruchsichtigung des Goldbergbaus,'" was his reply. "It must have taken you a long time to write it," said I, wishing to make some remark whilst thinking out my next question, for the brevity of his reply rather took my breath away. "Yes, it was an estimate, in so far as I could make it, of the probable output of gold during the next five years in the Witwatersand district of the South African Republic." "Then is it possible to gauge the extent of the auriferous wealth of a country?" I ventured to inquire. "To a certain extent, yes," was his reply, "and in South Africa more especially; but here in Western Australia the calculation appears to me, from what I have already seen, to be more difficult; and until I have been all over the fields it will be impossible to arrive at any conclusion, for the geological conditions of the two countries are so different." "And when will your report on Western Australia be published?" "Not till I have returned from my tour, and it has then to be submitted to my Government before I can publish it in any form." "Of course you will put it in book form ultimately?" "Yes; although that will not be until I return to Berlin, for I have a lot to do here first, and have particularly to go round Hannans and the Murchison." "And that will be?" "Not until the middle of next year. From Western Australia I propose proceeding to Victoria, where I shall visit Ballarat, then on to New South Wales and Queensland, where I shall visit Mount Morgan and Charters Towers. Then to New

Zealand, afterwards homeward *viâ* America, where Madame Schmeisser will meet me; so you see I have a big programme before me——" "Just one last word, Herr Schmeisser," I ventured to interpolate, as the buggy drew up at the door of Mr. Varden's house at the mine. "Your report on the South African mines had the effect of attracting an enormous amount of capital from both Great Britain and the Continent; will the result of your visit to Western Australia——" "We shall see," replied the great man, anticipating the end of my query.

This was in September last, and since we had the chat together, Herr Schmeisser's report on the Hannans Brownhill Mine has been made known, its satisfactory nature in no small measure helping to convince the world of the enormous possibilities of Western Australian mines.

HERR SCHMEISSER, DR. VOGELSANG, AND MR. WM. A. MERCER ABOUT TO START ON THEIR TOUR OF THE FIELDS.

CHAPTER XI.

"WHITE FEATHER."

The Kanowna or "White Feather" goldfield—The "Criterion" Hotel—Heavy machinery for the "White Feather"—Summary justice at the goldfields—Visit to the underground works of the "White Feather"—Mine fever—Demand for really experienced miners.

ANOTHER very rising and promising mining township within easy reach of Coolgardie, and which is connected with it by a coach service, is the Kanowna or White Feather goldfield. One afternoon, I went over from Hannans, a distance of a little under twelve miles. The town, which is slightly older than its neighbour, struck me as being much better laid out, and of a very thriving appearance. Ground here on the town site is going off as rapidly as anywhere, with "fields" and prices rising every day. The hotel, of which there are several, appeared to be better constructed, and cleaner than at most of the stations through which I had passed. After a very fair lunch at the "Criterion" (what memories the name evoked in the far-away bush settlement!), I strolled out to the mines, which were only a few hundred yards distant, and where all the usual methods of getting at the gold were in operation or in active preparation. Of the several important claims being worked naturally, the one which attracted

WHITE FEATHER REWARD CLAIM MINE.

my attention was that which had gained for the field its popularity, and for its lucky finder, the usual Government grant as a recognition of his success, *i.e.*, White Feather Reward Claim. Through the courtesy of its manager, Captain Z. Smith, I was permitted to visit the workings; for, apart from the fact of its being the principal mine of the district, the buildings and machinery were apparently so far ahead of any of the others in the way of readiness to commence, that it was the only place to visit in the field at the time of my arrival. The plant, which was in course of erection, promised, when finished, to be as perfect a sample of mining engineering as one could wish to see. Still, here as elsewhere, I found the difficulties of transport had delayed all the heavy machinery *en route*, and this in spite of the exorbitant charges for freight extorted by the various firms of carriers. The boilers alone cost as much as £77 per ton, whilst the rate for the ordinary machinery was as high as £30. When one came to consider the rate of wages, cost of building materials, etc., it gave one just a slight idea of what must be involved, in the way of capital, before a mine can be even started on its career, let alone pay a dividend. I was shown over the fine engine-house, where the powerful set of engines were almost ready to commence working. These engines, I noticed, were from an Australian foundry, that of Martin, of Gawler, near Adelaide, as was also the massive ten-head battery, which was nearly completed. The huge "poppet legs," —as the timbering over the main shaft is called—are made from "Salmon gum," wood of immense weight, and hard as iron. The difficulty of getting them into

shape and position, in consequence, is very much increased. I was, of course, shown the "Specimens," without which no visit to a mine would be complete, and was much interested in the valuable stone given us to examine. The reef running through the claim is totally different from anything I had seen at Hannans Brownhill, or the Boulder, where the gold is found in a dark-coloured strata of schist and decomposed ironstone. Here, white quartz is the carrying medium, if it can be so called, and very pretty does the gold look against the white stone. The gold in this formation is much coarser, and often consists of isolated nuggets. The captain told me he had many thousands of tons of rock ready for crushing, some of it showing such rich indications that he would not like to venture an opinion as to how many ounces would run to the ton, something startling undoubtedly. The underground workings, he went on to tell me, were being rapidly developed, so no time would be lost as soon as the engines were started. I had meanwhile been rambling round the works, and had reached a shaft which stood on the top of a big mound of loose quartz. "Here is some of the stone I was just telling you about," he continued, "so you can judge for yourself;" and there certainly was no difficulty about it, for the first piece I picked out of the heap was almost a specimen, and so good a one as to almost surprise the captain himself. Yet here, as elsewhere, was all this valuable stone left absolutely unwatched. It must be a very honest country. Speaking of this honesty, it may be of interest to mention how this confidence is displayed, not only at the mines but

everywhere. Tents or encampments are left for hours and even days in the bush without ever being touched when full of clothes, etc.,—things which one would think were of use to some of the poor wretches round about. The fear of the summary justice I mentioned in my last chapter is indeed a strong deterrent. The way this is carried out is as neat as it is effective. Immediately a man is caught stealing, the "roll up" is sounded, that is to say, a tin pannikin is beaten vigorously drumwise, and, on hearing this ominous sound, all the miners in the camp hurry up to the place. The case is roughly explained to them, an impromptu court is immediately formed, a president elected, and there and then the culprit is tried. If he is found guilty, and when he has been caught *in flagrante delicto*, there is of course no doubt about it, he is ordered to leave the camp within a given time—generally a few minutes only—and never return to it again under the risk of being tarred and feathered. It is extraordinary what wholesome fear there is of this "roll up" system, far more so in many cases than of the threat of calling in the police.

SUMMARY JUSTICE.

My next visit was to the underground works, which

always present the most interesting feature to my mind. The cage was not yet in working order, so I had no choice but to go down by the ladders, which the captain told me only reached some 160 feet, and were so easy that a baby could walk down them. It would have to be a very sturdy and old-fashioned sort of baby, I thought, for they turned out to be not quite so facile as he promised, and necessitated far more agility on my part than I had bargained for, although I was beginning to get used to mining shafts by now. Some of the ladders were what is called "swinging," and to find myself hanging on them over the dark abyss below produced anything but an agreeable sensation. "Mine fever," as the dizziness is called when very acute, is not at all an uncommon thing, and occurs even amongst miners, whilst it is a very usual occurrence with new hands. The captain told me of an incident which had happened not long before on these very ladders to an experienced engineer who was visiting the mine; he was suddenly seized with this giddiness whilst on the steepest ladder, and had he not the presence of mind to hook his arms through the rungs, he must have fallen off. As it was he was only rescued with difficulty. The careless way the miners get into of going up and down as though they could not fall, is no doubt to a great extent the reason of many accidents that happen. There was a man in the hospital at Hannans who had had the most miraculous escape from death I have ever heard of. Whilst coming up the ladder of a deep shaft of the Boulder Mine, of which he was captain, he missed his footing (through his carelessness, as he himself explained it),

and fell a distance of ninety feet, getting off with merely a gash in his thigh and two broken arms. A fall like this would either have killed or maimed most men for life.

I was told an amusing incident of an Irishman who fell down a shaft a distance of some forty feet, and on his mates going to his assistance, expecting to find him seriously injured, he coolly remarked that he wasn't much hurt, and that he "would have had to go down" to get his hammer anyhow! But *revenons à nos moutons*, we at length reached the 160-foot level and started on a tour of the "drives." Owing no doubt to the white colour of the quartz walls, the obscurity was not nearly so great down here as in other mines I had visited, nor was the heat so noticeable. It may be of interest to mention, whilst speaking of the darkness of the mines, that as a rule a manager will endeavour, when paying a visit to a mine, to do so at night, as being a better time for seeing how the work is getting on; for when coming from darkness into what is little better than darkness, the eyes are better prepared for the obscurity. Of course at this low level this obscurity is perpetual; from long familiarity with it the old miners actually declare that when on night shift they are able to tell when the sun is rising by the way their candle burns! Apart from the characteristic colour of the quartz reef which was being cut through, and which showed here some splendid signs of gold, there was nothing remarkably different in the workings of the White Feather Reward from those of others I had seen. That this mine was being developed on scientific principles, and would return a handsome profit as soon

as the machinery was ready, there could not be a shadow of a doubt, for I saw splendidly rich stone hewn out whilst looking on, and quite equal to any "specimens" I had seen in the office above.

As I returned to the captain's house, having accepted an invitation to remain and have a cup of tea, the conversation naturally reverted to what I had just been shown, and I was somewhat surprised to learn that for really experienced miners there would be always an opening in this part of the country for some time to come at any rate, and that the brawny Cornish man was greatly in demand, the rate of wages being £3 10*s.* per week and two gallons of water (not beer) per day, while mining blacksmiths, and other skilled artisans, could earn as much as four and five pounds per week. If, therefore, the small prospector or the dry-blower has no luck and gets hard up, his chances of getting regular work are nil, as unskilled odd-job men are not in demand anywhere on the fields.

HOME LIFE IN A BUSH TOWNSHIP. AN EVENING SCENE.

CHAPTER XII.

FROM "HANNANS" TO THE "GREAT FINGALL."

A visit to Mount Margaret decided upon—Hiring of camels—Provisions for the journey—My camel man, Scott—The start from Hannans—First experience of bush life—A youthful prospector—The Credo Mine—Our camels stray to their old feeding-grounds—We stop at Kanowna for water—A "lake"—A slow and monotonous journey—Wild flowers in the bush—The mining township of Kurnalpi—Scott leaves our bread behind at the last camp—Travelling through the bush—Aborigines—"Condensers"—Accident to the buggy—The "Great Fingal Reefs" Mine.

In my last chapter I gave an account of my visit to the "White Feather" goldfield. That locality, situated some thirty-six miles from Coolgardie, was the limit of the short trips one could make when using that centre as one's base of operations. I had decided to make a sort of détour of the entire district, and to visit the most interesting and best known of the many outlying camps which extend as far north as Mount Margaret, and to return *viâ* Niagara and Menzies, for with the advent of the railway to Hannans, in a few months, things are certain to "hum" in what are now distant and isolated "blocks," where, however, I learn gold is as plentiful as anywhere else on the fields. It was, therefore, to a certain extent with the idea of verifying

all these *coleur de rose* reports that I made up my mind to "rough it" for a few weeks, in order to see for myself what was really going on. The hospitality and great kindness which appear to be so innate a feature in the Western Australian character again asserted itself as soon as my intentions were known. I was busy arranging for the camels which would be necessary for my proposed expedition, when the genial Warden of Hannans, Mr. W. H. Jephson, insisted on my accepting the loan of his buggy and team. The offer was made in so generous a spirit that there was no refusing it, and when almost immediately after another of my newly made friends came forward with the proffer of his own "ship of the desert," I felt that my cup of happiness, if the knowledge of the goodwill of men towards one is any evidence, was indeed overflowing.

Although these camels can carry as much as four or five hundredweight apiece for long distances, and my baggage, even with the necessary tinned and other provisions and water-barrels, did not amount to anything like the weight I had, as it were, at my disposal, I considered it best to be on the safe side, and so as not to run any risk of a breakdown whilst far away from assistance, decided to hire a couple more animals, in order that, whatever might happen in the way of an ordinary accident, there need be no delay on the road. I had been advised to purchase any camels I might require, but I discovered that the market value of them fluctuated so considerably, more especially when it is a question of reselling, that I decided not to chance it. At the time of my visit, camels could be

hired in Coolgardie at the rate of one pound per day for riding, and twelve shillings and sixpence for hack-camels, a big deposit being usually demanded on each one besides. A good fast animal for riding purposes cost about seventy pounds, as against thirty to forty pounds for the slower pack carried.

The provisions for the journey required careful deliberation, for I was about to leave all the "stores" and other such places where supplies could be obtained, and for some time would be subsisting only on what I was carrying. These comestibles naturally took the form of tinned meats, "tinned dog," as all the various preparations of beef and mutton in the bush are humorously, though it is to be hoped not presciently, designated, and which supplemented by such creature comforts as a case of Bouillon Fleet, tinned vegetables, preserved fruits, plum-pudding, and jam, made up a sufficiently satisfying, if not altogether epicurean, larder. It may be mentioned that, before the arrival of civilisation at Coolgardie not many months back, and with it the welcome addition to the ordinary conditions of life in a big mining camp in the shape of fresh meat and vegetables, tinned food was the natural order of things, though out in the "back blocks" there are hundreds of men who have not seen, let alone tasted, fresh animal food for years. In fact since their arrival in this part of the colony, the everlasting damper, and the tin of "dog," washed down (the damper and the "dog," not the tin) by the inevitable tea, forming the staple meal of the bushman, a meal which though perhaps sufficiently filling to satisfy the actual cravings of an appetite blunted by so protracted a period of "roughing

it," is not calculated to fortify the system against the insidious attacks of the many diseases so common to the "pioneers" in these distant regions, and which are in a great measure directly attributable to a continuous diet of tinned food. My commissariat arrangements complete, the next question was to find a servant to accompany me. I had been strongly advised to take a white man, in preference to an Afghan, as being more reliable in the bush, and also as making a better and more useful dependent than the arrogant Asiatic. But white servants are not over plentiful in a district like Hannans, where every unemployed man, if he can manage to scrape together a few pounds, immediately starts off prospecting on his own account. At this juncture the Warden again came to my assistance and recommended his own camel-man, a fellow named Scott, so strongly that I had no hesitation in jumping at so good a chance of getting some one who not only knew the camels we were taking, but also the tracks and the district we were going through, though certainly the habitual ill-tempered look of the fellow was certainly not in his favour. How much I had occasion to regret engaging this man will be seen later on.

All my preparations at last being complete, I started from Hannans on the next stage of my journey on Sunday afternoon, September 9th, 1895. A party of friends assembled at the Warden's camp to wish me good-bye and drink success to the journey. My caravan was quite an imposing one, consisting as it did of seven camels and the buggy, for the Warden's man had decided to bring a camel of his own, on which was mounted a black friend of his, who was accompanying

EN ROUTE FOR THE GREAT FINGALL.

him to help with the camels. To the buggy were harnessed two camels, tandem fashion, and driven in the ordinary way from the seat of the vehicle, thus forming as original-looking a team as could well be imagined. I shall never forget the impression produced on me by the first glimpse of this strange procession. It looked like a vision of fairy land, or a dream of the "Arabian Nights," whilst the effect was so ludicrous that I went into convulsions of laughter, and remained holding my sides standing in the road, gazing on it as it wended its way slowly along the dusty road.

The sun was already low by the time I had made a start, so it was decided not to proceed far that day, but to encamp about two miles from the town, and then get away very early the following morning. A very short distance sufficed to take us into the solitude of the bush, and just before sundown we halted a few yards from the track in a sort of clearing which promised well for an impromptu camp. A young fellow who, on his camel, was going out prospecting, and had accompanied us so far, also decided to remain with us for the night, and, as he was an experienced bushman and interesting to boot, he helped us not only to make things comfortable for the night, but also to while away the after-dark hours between supper and bed-time. I thus had my first experience of actual bush life, and the novelty of it to a great extent compensated me for the inevitable "roughing it." This novelty, however, only too soon wore off and left the bare uncomfortable facts in all their uncompromising reality. Still this first day's (or rather night's) experience was not altogether unpleasant, and in the

light of the huge camp fire with the surrounding forest, extending like some huge cathedral into the distant gloom, the effect was distinctly impressive.

The chat we had round the fire that night gave me a good idea of the pluck and determination which actuate the hardy prospector in these inhospitable regions; for I learnt from my *compagnon de voyage* (who, it may be mentioned, was only about twenty-one years of age) that his intention was, after getting his water-barrels filled at the next station, to deviate from the track and plunge right into the bush, making his way as best he could towards a granite outcrop he had learnt the existence of shortly before, which from all accounts promised to be of an auriferous nature, should he be fortunate in finding the place. It may be imagined the difficulties he had before him with a trackless forest to penetrate, and no precise information to go upon. He proposed to camp in the locality and prospect around in the hope of striking a payable reef, in which case he would, there and then, "peg out" a "claim," and immediately return to the nearest township, where there was a mining registrar, in order to register his "find," which of course, if it proved a valuable one, would ensure a handsome recompense for the hardships he would have undergone. Meanwhile, pending any definite discovery, and naturally all who seek here do not find, he would have to pass many dreary days alone in the bush, until, in fact, his water or provisions gave out, when he would perforce have to come out to get fresh supplies, the necessary funds to keep him going being supplied by a "chum," who was employed at Hannans; so if anything came of

the venture the two divided the proceeds. The big "finds" which have been made recently all over the Coolgardie district have attracted quite a host of these plucky explorers, and I learnt that the bush is at the present moment being traversed in all directions, for there appears to be a very general impression that gold

PROSPECTORS' CAMP, CREDO MINE, BLACK FLAG.

will be found everywhere, and that with a little patience it is bound to be a case of "all prizes—no blanks."

In some instances, however, but little patience was needed, as, for example, when two friends whom I know personally started off on a six months' prospecting tour with camels and provisions, and within three weeks found a rich reef, which they pegged out and named the "Credo." I was at Hannans when they came in loaded with magnificent specimens, and

radiant at having made their fortunes in so short a time.

We were all up betimes next morning, though such unwonted energy proved unnecessary, for it turned out that during the night our camels had strayed to their old feeding-grounds, many miles off, so it took some hours to bring them back again. I therefore had my first experience of the patience which is so indispensable a quality if one is to enjoy a tour on camels. However much time may be money, when one is in the busy haunts of men, out in the far-away solitudes of Nature, such ideas must be promptly discarded, as one soon finds, more especially if one is dependent for one's locomotion on so uncertain a beast as the camel. This patience I had already in a certain measure learnt when crossing the Gobi Desert, and it now required no effort of memory to recall the wearisome delays which made my life a burden on this never to be forgotten journey; for here we were, not over two miles from our starting-point, yet forced to sit down and while away hour after hour as best we could, waiting for the men to return with the wanderers. It was certainly a bad commencement to what I was prepared to find a tedious journey. However, all comes to him who waits, even camels, and, after a delay of about four hours, we once more made a start and managed to get as far as Kanowna (the White Feather), a distance of twelve miles, without any farther serious stoppage. We had now to halt to fill our water-cans and give the camels a drink, as there would be no possibility of letting them have their fill again for some days after this. Having had a sort of farewell civilised meal at one of the hotels,

I strolled down to the condensers, where my camels had preceded me. Little had I imagined what fourpence per gallon for water meant, when I told the man to give the animals "as much as they could drink." I do not believe I am an inhuman man, and I feel sure I am as fond of animals as any one, but I must confess that my kindly feelings went down to a very low ebb indeed as I stood there watching gallon after gallon disappear down the apparently insatiable throat of the animals. I forget for the moment how many sovereigns this long drink cost me, but it certainly was the biggest teetotal drink I have ever paid for. I learnt afterwards that it was a month since the poor brutes had had a drink, as they had not been working during that time, and when out at feed they never require water, it appears. However true this may be, they undoubtedly make up for it when they get a chance—at somebody else's expense. This watering operation had occupied so much time that it was getting well on towards dusk when we again got on the road, so there was nothing for it but to encamp for the night near the town. This was certainly not fast travelling—fourteen miles in a day and a half! Luckily, this was for the moment the last serious delay, and the next morning we got away fairly early, and by sundown had put a good twenty-five miles between us and Kanowna. The scenery, meanwhile, had begun to change somewhat; the bush had gradually become less dense, and towards mid-day we got into open country and sighted a large lake, —with *real* water in it! To the reader to whom the wilds of Western Australia may be unfamiliar, this astonishment on my part will doubtless appear strange;

it is therefore necessary to explain that out in these parts a "lake" does not necessarily contain water, though it may necessarily do so at certain times of the year if any rain should happen to fall. As a general rule, these inland seas are but wide expanses of arid salt and sand, whereon the curious effect known as "mirage" usually takes the place of the missing element, and, as a rule so realistically, that it was very hard, indeed, to believe that the distant rippling water, looking so refreshingly cool under the glare of the scorching mid-day sun, was in reality but a cruel and deceptive illusion, which would gradually retreat as one advanced towards it. In this case, however, there was, though only a few inches deep, a sufficiency of fresh water to have watered the camels, had we not done so the previous evening, and, with the recollection of what that drink had cost me, it was annoying to thus find how little reliable information was evidently to be obtained on the road, for we had been distinctly told that there was no water for at least two days ahead; this, added to an entire absence of anything in the way of an accurate map of the country, made me feel my journey was going to be a somewhat intricate one. It struck me as being strange, that a country that has been traversed and retraversed so many times in all directions should still be, as it were, a *terra incognita*, so far as the only obtainable charts of it are concerned. It would surely pay the Western Australian Government to have all these rising districts properly surveyed and their accurate mileage taken. It will probably end in private enterprise supplying what is undoubtedly a serious want. The improvement in the surrounding

landscape was but of short duration; for almost immediately after crossing the lake the bush recommenced and continued again for miles.

Once fairly under weigh, I found that, in spite of all I had been told of the "speed" of our animals, we did not get over the ground at any alarming rate. The camels drawing the buggy had to be whipped and yelled at continuously to be made to keep up the semblance of a trot for even a few hundred yards, whilst the riding and pack camels, usually close together, advanced at a slow, steady, plodding pace, which rarely averaged four miles an hour. So we had to "stick to it" to do twenty-five miles between sunrise and nightfall. The monotony of these long weary hours through such dreary scenery is indescribable: only one who has had experience of camel travelling can form any idea of what this means, and then only if he has been through the bush. Had it not been that I had taken the precaution to provide myself with a large and varied stock of books, it is hard to say how I should have managed to pass away the days. If the amount of books annually read out in the bush could be accurately ascertained it would probably be astounding; for my own part I never remember reading so much continuously—the steady, quiet movement of the camel, once one is accustomed to it, making reading possible without any effort or strain on the eyes. One other great advantage also is that the animal requires no guiding, if following others, and is as sure-footed as it is possible to be. This continual reading and the consequent accumulation of books of all sorts has resulted in a sort of

huge circulating library as it were; and at most of the camps one can "swop" books, that is to say, if the ones one wishes to part with have not already been read.

The next few days passed without particular incident. The country we traversed varied but slightly, now and again flat open plains and big "lakes," with wide extents of bush and scrub in between, presented what one may call its most characteristic features. Wild flowers flourished in profusion in certain well-defined zones—in some places indeed forming quite a carpet of yellow, mauve, blue, or white. Most of these were of the everlasting "species," though there were a few presenting a curious combination of a blue and mauve flower on the same stem, which appeared to have only recently bloomed; there was also another curious variety with leaves not unlike seaweed, and from which, on being broken, a few drops of brackish water exuded, enough to just moisten one's lips if water was scarce. Considering the dryness of the soil, and the almost total absence of rain or dew, it struck me as remarkable how all these delicate plants could flourish so well and look so fresh under such arid conditions. As with the flowering plants, so it was with the trees and shrubs, all of which appeared to grow to finer proportions and to look greener when on barren ground than on actual soil.

I usually halted for the night about half-an-hour before sundown if in a favourable place for giving the camels a chance of a feed before dark, and the few hours which followed were certainly the pleasantest of the whole day. To put up the tent, prepare supper, and then have a pipe in the light of a huge

MY CARAVAN IN THE BUSH.

bonfire before turning in, was quite a welcome diversion after eight hours' tedious ride. Camping out in the bush has certainly many charms of its own. For the first few days, at any rate, I thoroughly enjoyed the rough healthy life. There being no excuse for sitting up late, I generally got to bed shortly before nine o'clock, to sleep like a top after the fatigue of the day. The tent I soon learned to dispense with, and found that "Nature's starry canopy," which is the usual roof of the bushman, was a very pleasant one, as soon as one got accustomed to it. What indeed could be more soothing than to be lulled to sleep by the twinkling of the stars? It was the couch of a poet! Early rising was of course the order of the day, though, in spite of breakfast at 6.30, we seldom got away till close on eight o'clock. Fetching in and repacking the camels always took up an unconscionable time, for, as I have already mentioned, I was not fortunate in the man I had engaged, and was not long in discovering that his ill-looks did not belie his character, and a more uncivil surly fellow than he turned out to be has never before been my ill-luck to meet. I soon realised that I was for the moment so completely in his power as to be able to do nothing but grin and bear it; for there was no possibility of changing him *en route*, since he had charge of the Warden's camels as well as of the ones I had hired, an unpleasant state of affairs which, I trust, it will not be my fate to ever again endure. My release, if I may so call it, came sooner than I expected it, but I will not anticipate. Three days out from Hannans, I arrived at Kurnalpi, a little mining township, now almost deserted, though not more than nine or ten months ago there

were some 2000 men working on its alluvial fields, which were perhaps the first discovered in the Colony. With the playing out "however of the alluvial" the big camp gradually dispersed, till now, with the exception of a few parties prospecting for reefs, there is scarcely any population to speak of, and the place presents a very desolate appearance. Whether Kurnalpi will ever regain its old prestige will now depend on the result of the prospecting work which is being done. Geologists have been so completely "at sea" in their theories with regard to the mineral conditions of Western Australia, as is proved by the present unprecedented state of affairs all over the fields (and also in their assumption that a rich alluvial field means an impoverished reef, which has been distinctly negatived by the rich low-level fields at Hannans), that it is possible that Kurnalpi may again have its day, though certainly at the time of my visit things were not "booming" there.

Before starting the next morning, I stopped at the "store" to buy some bread and to give the camels another drink, this time at sixpence per gallon, Scott having some idea of his own that it was necessary to water them every day, if possible. Another wearisome delay therefore ensued. We at last got away and managed to do some eight miles by mid-day. The tract now lay through richly mineralised country, the ground in places for miles around being so thickly covered with fine ironstone that it looked almost as though caviare had been spread over it. To this curious appearance succeeded a zone, as it were, of ironstone and white quartz intermingled—presenting a sort of

peppered appearance—then small blocks of quartz alone, after which flowers reappeared, whilst Malgar scrub grew everywhere, in fact, so closely that the track in places could scarcely be seen for more than fifty yards ahead. We halted for lunch in a pleasant open patch where the tall bushes afforded some slight

IN THE BUSH.

protection against the intense heat of the sun's rays. Just as I was making myself comfortable, I discovered, to my annoyance, that, although Scott had purchased sufficient bread to last us till we reached the next camp, he had somehow managed to leave it behind. So here I was in a pretty fix. We should not reach

Edjudina for at least three days, and there was barely a loaf left. After some discussion, I decided that it would involve too much delay to send the boy back to fetch it, as it would mean waiting the whole afternoon. So I made up my mind to chance getting a little flour at the first condenser we came to, and meanwhile to try and eat my tinned meat without the "staff of life," and to make up for its absence by a liberal diet of preserved plum pudding, of which delicacy I had fortunately a goodly store. It is curious how easily under difficulties one can accustom oneself to unpleasant conditions—for my own part, I should never have imagined, till that occasion forced me to try it, that it was possible to eat and relish cold preserved plum pudding as a substitute for bread, with, say, a tin of spiced beef or haricot mutton. Still, as the bushman remarked, as he ate his potatoes with the skins on, "it all helps to fill up," and one soon gets used to it. That afternoon was amongst the longest and most wearisome I had spent. A heavy, sandy, thickly wooded country, God-forsaken looking in the extreme, so much so that I wondered what inducement even gold could have offered to tempt man to explore such awful solitudes, when the very trees seemed to be sighing and moaning, and not a sign of life was to be seen anywhere. The ground was so barren that we had to travel on till late in the evening before we reached any feed for the camels, and it was quite dark when we halted. The boy started off next morning with the pack camels through the bush, in order to make a short cut and join us farther on, which he did a couple of hours later.

It is little short of wonderful how men accustomed to the bush find their way through it. From point to point they go with an accuracy which is positively astounding—without compass and often without even water or food, they will unhesitatingly plunge into the trackless wilderness and make a bee-line for the place they are bound for. How they do it they cannot themselves explain, as they own. It is doubtless a sort of instinct which can only be possessed by a man who has had long experience of the country, and who is not easily overcome by his nerves, for once off the track, and in amongst the trees or scrub, the slightest hesitation or doubt in his power to get through would be fatal. It was then indeed a case of "he who hesitates is lost." It often happens though, that men who fancy they have gained the necessary experience have ventured to go out into the bush to track their camels, or make for another camp perhaps close by, and are never heard of again till perchance some day long after their bleached bones are discovered, and testify their awful fate. Their clothes, as a rule, are scattered in a big circle for some distance around, it being a curious fact that the madness which their dreadful position creates appears to force them at once to discard their garments. People who have been fortunate enough to be found alive after being "bushed" for only a short time have invariably been in a state of complete nudity. I had a long chat with a man who had spent many years in the bush, and his words of advice were continually ringing in my ears whilst on this expedition. "Never under any circumstances venture into the bush out of sight of your camp

unless accompanied by an experienced bushman. So long as you remember this caution," he added, "you have nothing whatever to fear on your journey. There are no wild animals, or in fact anything to harm you—the only thing to constantly go in fear of is the bush itself."

It may, therefore, be imagined how restricted was the area around the camp in which it was possible to circulate without running any risk of getting "bushed," and, in consequence, how still more dreary appeared the surroundings, which had almost the effect at times when the scrub was very dense of imprisoning one. There appeared to be quite a method in tracking anything through the forest, and the aborigines out here are wonderfully expert at it; so much so, in fact, that every police station has a couple or so of "black trackers" attached to it. In the event of any one being lost, or of a prisoner escaping, these are immediately put to work, and it is very seldom, indeed, that they lose their quarry, though, of course, it does not follow that they find it at once. It takes some time to pick up the starting tracks, after which the rest is comparatively easy.

At a lake we reached two days later, I found a condensing plant in operation, so we stopped to fill our water-barrels, and, of course, to give the camels a drink. The man in charge, fortunately, had a sufficient store of flour to be able to spare us some to go on with, so I bought four pounds of him for six shillings.

A slight description of one of these "condensers" will be of interest, for it is solely by the use of them that any fresh water is at all obtainable in most places

A CONDENSER.

up here. By a freak of Nature, nearly all the underground water in this part of the Colony is little better than a strong solution of brine—in many districts containing as much as *twenty-seven ounces of salt to the gallon,* whilst, in consequence of the salty nature of the sandy soil, any rain that may fall, if it is not immediately absorbed, in a very short time becomes brackish and undrinkable. Along our track on the shores of most of the lakes were condensers, the water for the purpose being easily obtainable by sinking shafts of only a few feet in depth. Most of the plants for the purpose were of the most primitive construction, and often presented quite a picturesque appearance. Considering that the fuel and water could be had for the mere trouble of taking it, it may be imagined that after the slight initial expense of galvanised-iron pipes, etc., has been recouped, a very handsome profit can be made on sixpence per gallon; and that such is undoubtedly the case is proved by the fact that when there is any opposition the prices are immediately lowered.

An accident happened to the buggy that afternoon, which might have caused very serious delay had it not been discovered in time. As we were driving over a particularly rough track, a sharp snap was heard, which, on examination, proved to be in the iron supporting the front of the vehicle, and which in consequence completely precluded any possibility of proceeding farther, except at a walking pace, unless a blacksmith could be found at the nearest mine we reached, some miles ahead. However, there was nothing for it but to make the best of it; so after making sure that there was no immediate danger of the buggy collapsing, as a

strong nut appeared for the moment to hold the two parts of the ironwork together, we once more started, though very gingerly, indeed, at a snail's pace. The next day we reached the rain-water "soak," at a place called Edjudina, and, after a good wash, to get rid of the accumulated dust and sand of the past few days, I made my way to the famous "Great Fingall Reefs" Mine, some four miles distant. Here I was very cordially received by the manager, Mr. Mackinnon, and his assistant, Mr. Frampton. On learning of my accident, Mr. Mackinnon expressed his regret at having no blacksmith at the moment on the mine, but courteously offered to help me out of my difficulty, if he possibly could. After some deliberation, it was decided that it would be impossible to proceed farther north with the buggy in its broken condition, so I determined to proceed with the camels only, and to leave the vehicle at the mine, to be returned to Hannans by the first team going down. As the manager furthermore courteously offered to lend me his riding-saddle for my camel, the difficulties for the moment appeared to be at an end.

After a pleasant lunch and a chat I had a stroll round the mine, which, although at the time of my visit was in a somewhat undeveloped state, promised to be a very rich property in a short time. Difficulties and expense of transport had hitherto considerably retarded its progress, but with the lowering of freight charges this backward condition would soon be overcome, and already a great portion of the machinery had arrived. Plenty of good condensing water was obtainable, and everything appeared to point to a very successful

issue. The quartz composing the reef was remarkable as presenting totally different features to any I had seen elsewhere, being of a dark mottled blue colour instead of the dead white which was so noticeable at Coolgardie. The formation of the reef in one part of the property was also peculiar, presenting a succession of ellipses which, when stacked on the dump, round the shaft, looked like a lot of huge fossilised broad beans. It was a Sunday afternoon, and a cricket match was in progress amongst the miners in a clearing of the bush close by. Of course there was no grass, such vegetation being unknown in these parts, and the ground was several inches deep in fine dust, which rose in clouds at every movement of the players. The wicket was covered with a long strip of cocoa-nut fibre matting, otherwise, batting would have been an impossibility. The rough costumes of the men and, in fact, the whole scene was most incongruous.

I dined with my two genial hosts, and after a very pleasant chat round the camp fire "turned in" to a comfortable tent which they insisted on placing at my disposal.

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM THE "GREAT FINGALL" TO MOUNT MARGARET.

Through the bush to Mount Margaret—Absence of rainfall—The "bell-bird"—Aborigines in the West Australian bush—Miners' indifference to sanitary precautions—Washing in the bush—Contention with Scott with reference to water—Mount Margaret in view.

My decision to proceed with camels only necessitated my completely overhauling my baggage and repacking it in such a manner as to distribute the loads equally. This operation naturally involved much delay: it was, therefore, late before we made a start the following morning. I had the satisfaction of knowing, however, that unencumbered by the buggy we should be able to leave the beaten track and start right across the bush, so saving time considerably. With hearty good wishes from my two new friends I at last got away, and my now reduced caravan—presenting a much more rational appearance—once more wended its way northward. The distance from the Great Fingall to Mount Margaret, as the crow flies, is about ninety miles, but it is considerably more by the road. Immediately after leaving the mine, the black boy, who rode at the head of the procession, steered right through the bush, and in a short time we were away from all tracks, and forcing our passage through the dense undergrowth

which at times was so thick as to make it difficult for the camels to get through. The scene around was one of utter desolation and solitude, and indescribably weird and impressive. Not a sign of life of any sort was anywhere visible, the oppressive silence being only broken by the occasional tinkle of one of our camel's bells or the snapping of a bough. Rain is an extreme rarity in these parts, and consequently dead trees seemed to predominate, their white dried-up trunks and boughs standing out like so many skeletons in strange uncanny relief against the sky. Although to all outward appearance not only dead but quite dried up, a good shower of rain, I learnt, worked wonders; and within a few hours of its fall quite a transformation scene is produced, dead bushes and trees sprouting forth into new life, whilst grasses and flowers sprang up on all sides as if by magic. Unfortunately, however, anything like a regular rainfall is unknown in these regions, and in many districts we passed through none had

IN THE BUSH.

fallen for years. The dead appearance of everything struck me as being one of the chief characteristics of the bush. The curious sapless nature of all the bushes and trees tended to strengthen this impression, every stick being so dry and brittle as to break at the slightest touch, whilst the fallen boughs cracked like biscuits under our camel's feet. It is undoubtedly owing to this peculiar characteristic that it is possible to make a straight line when travelling across the country, only an exceptionally heavy tree or the densest undergrowth necessitating any deviation. In no other part of the world I believe is forest land so easily cleared as in this particular part of Western Australia. That fuel is plentiful at all times goes without saying, for the ground always seems as though strewn with tinder. I shall long remember the huge bonfires we used to light at night after supper, for there was never any difficulty in finding dead trees to burn, and often we would make up a heap of three or four of them round the upright trunk of another, which would flare up like fireworks in a few minutes and make a huge blaze which generally lasted all night, so that in the morning the ashes were still red hot, and with the addition of a few fresh sticks easily fanned into a blaze. This dryness of everything is of course in a great measure attributable to the absence of a regular rainfall. Certain districts I learnt were more fortunate than others, but the general outcry always appeared to be the same—"if it would only rain." Curiously enough, although the rainfall in these parts is as a rule very slight, and of very rare occurrence, the days would often commence with every indication of showery

weather, so much so in fact that one would frequently hesitate as to the advisability of getting out one's waterproof at starting, but before mid-day the threatening clouds had always passed away, and the sun was blazing as usual. If there is really anything in the American invention for producing rain even when the sky is cloudless it should be brought out to the West Australian Bush, for there indeed is a splendid field for it, and one which would doubtless make the inventor a huge fortune, if it proved successful.

SOLITUDE.

The entire absence of anything in the way of sport made the days pass very slowly—for one could not be always reading. I had brought my gun with me, but never had any occasion to even take it out of its case. As a matter of fact, during the whole time I was in the bush I only saw five living creatures—a wild turkey (in the far distance), two hawks, and three crows. The black boy declared he saw a dingo one day, but I was very much inclined to believe it was only an ordinary dog, for it went away very leisurely and showed no sign

of fear. The stillness of the surroundings was, however, occasionally broken by the curious chirping of the "bell-bird," the sound of which is not unlike the tinkling of a camel-bell. The peculiarly weird and plaintive call of this little feathered denizen of the vast forest brought back to my mind some beautiful lines of an ode to this bird written some years ago by an Australian Bush poet, Francis Myers.

* * * * *

"'Tis the bell-bird sweetly singing,
The sad, strange, small-voiced bird,
His low sweet carol ringing,
While scarce a sound is heard,
Save topmost sprays a-flutter,
And withered leaflets fall,
And the wistful oaks that utter
Their eerie, dreary call.

* * * * *

"What may be the bell-bird saying,
In that silvern, tuneful note?
Like a holy hermit's praying
His devotions seem to float
From a cavern dark and lonely
Where, apart from worldly men,
He repeats one dear word only,
Fondly o'er and o'er again."

One would also hear in places the curious whistle of another bird which reminded one of the commencement of an operatic air played on a piccolo flute. Beyond these and an occasional centipede round the fire at night I never saw or heard any signs of life the whole of the three weeks I was crossing the bush. Even the very Aborigines appeared to have deserted these regions; and although before starting on the expedition

I had been told no end of blood-curdling stories of the risks I was about to run of being speared and so forth when away up north, and the necessity, therefore, of always carrying a revolver, had it not been for occasionally seeing traces of their huts, the very existence

ABORIGINES.

of natives in these wilds might reasonably have been doubted.

As a sort of set-off to these uninteresting conditions, there was on all sides abundant evidence of the untold wealth of gold which awaits the prospector in these distant fastnesses. At one place where quartz and ironstone littered the ground as though it had been

rained on it, Scott and the black boy dismounted, and whilst leading their camels diligently looked out for nuggets, but without success, though at a small quartz outcrop they broke off a piece of the rock and found a few small specks of gold inside, not much certainly, but still sufficient to apparently prove the presence of the precious metal here as everywhere else. A few miles farther on we reached a big hill composed entirely of iron ore, the ground around looking as though it was strewn with big pieces of coal, all of which were heavy enough to prove that they were almost solid lumps of metal. There must have been millions of tons of iron lying loose on the surface. We got a fine view from the summit, the distant plains appearing like the sea. Owing doubtless to atmospheric conditions the distances out here are very deceptive and quite the reverse of what they usually are in other countries. Many a time we started off in the morning hoping to make what looked like the distant mountains by nightfall. In about an hour what turned out to be mist lifted, and we discovered, to our surprise, the mountains were but a low range of hills within quite a short distance of us.

To "new chums" from England the most trying part of roughing it in the bush is the scarcity of water and the badness of it when obtained anywhere but from condensers, and what astonishes them most is the indifference displayed by the "old hands" out here to the most ordinary sanitary precautions. One would imagine that the severe lesson taught by the terrible typhoid fever scourge of last summer would have had the effect of opening the eyes of the bushmen to the

fact that the prevention of the plague as well as of many other kindred diseases is to a great extent in their own hands. Yet the apathy with which the subject is regarded is continually evidenced by the number of men one meets in the bush who have had fever or are suffering from scorbutic affections, undoubtedly brought about in a great measure by drinking the liquid filth of the various "soaks."

Washing, of course, is a luxury but seldom indulged in out in the bush, it only being after or during an exceptionally heavy fall of rain that enough water for such extravagance is obtainable. I heard an amusing story about a man who had spent some months in a particularly dry district, and to whom therefore soap and water had long been unknown quantities. At last one day there was every indication of rain and the gathering clouds portended a heavy downfall, and sure enough a few drops began to fall as though the forerunner of the approaching storm. The opportunity was one not to be missed, and to slip out of his clothes

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and rub himself all over with soap in anticipation of a good wash was the work of a moment; but, alas! when all these preparations were complete the clerk of the weather changed his mind and took the rain elsewhere, for not a drop fell, and soon the sun was again blazing in a cloudless sky. The result of his bathing preparations had then to be scraped off with a knife.

My continual contention with Scott was with reference to water. I was determined to fill our water-barrels, whenever possible, with the condenser water; but, as he was an argumentative and obstinate fellow, he always put difficulties in the way of this. "It was no use carrying extra weight when splendid water would be found at the next 'soak,'" and so forth. On two occasions having trusted to his statement, I found the "splendid water" more like coffee and milk than anything else; yet the fellow's ill-humour and incivility increased in proportion to my annoyance, for he knew he had me in his power, and that I could neither go on or return without him and the camels. An incident, however, occurred which precipitated matters. Whether by accident, or otherwise, I could not find out, but within a day of Mount Margaret and two miles from the next "soak," I suddenly discovered, to my dismay, that we had only about a gallon of water left. We had some fifteen gallons the previous day, so where all the rest had gone was a mystery. It was no good discussing the matter, as that would not refill the barrels. So it was decided to push on with the utmost dispatch to the water so few miles ahead, though it must not be forgotten that twenty miles means very

nearly a day's journey with pack-camels. Whether it was the knowledge of not having a drop with me to drink, or what not, I do not know, but I certainly do not remember ever having felt thirstier than I did all that day. Towards evening we got out of the bush, and—welcome sight—saw Mount Margaret, not many miles ahead. The "soak" was some six miles nearer. At last we reached it, eager for the "long drink" to make up for so many dry hours. Imagine my feelings when, instead of the pellucid water I had been led to expect, I saw before me, in the centre of the dried-up bed of a creek, a few small shallow pools of the filthiest liquid ever dignified by the name of "water." In this loathsome stuff, standing knee-deep and stirring up the foul mud as they moved about, was a big crowd of camels and several horses. The peculiarly offensive habits of camels whilst drinking are too well known to be insisted on here: suffice it to mention, that a camel immediately pollutes any water it is allowed to enter whilst drinking. My indignation knew no bounds, and, had it not already been close on sundown, I should have pushed forward at once to the Mount Margaret Mine, where I learnt they had a condenser. I shall long remember my supper that night and breakfast next morning; for the juice out of a tin of fruit is but a poor substitute for a big drink or a cup of tea, and, as I was not in a mood for culinary arrangements, I made but a sort of scratch-meal, trusting to my luck to make up for it when we got to the mine. How Scott and the boy managed I know not; they were neither of them fastidious, so it is possible they made their tea as usual. We started as early as possible next morning

for the mine. It was a very hot day, and a short distance from where we had encamped a large "lake" had to be crossed, and the heat was so intense, that whilst traversing the big expanse of white sand it was almost overpowering.

CHAPTER XIV.

MOUNT MARGARET.

Impressive appearance of Mount Margaret—The Mount Margaret Reward Claim Mine—Visit to Newman's Quartz Hill Mine—The "Great Jumbo" claim—Return to "Mount Margaret"—Water *ad lib.*

SEEN from the bed of the lake the range of hills known as "Mount Margaret" presents a very imposing appearance, and for a flat country like Western Australia is almost impressive in its rugged grandeur. The broad flat expanse, from which the rocks rise abruptly, looked in the bright morning sunlight like some seashore with the tide out, an illusion which was considerably heightened by an exceptionally realistic effect of mirage which gave the impression of sea in the distance with such marvellous accuracy that, had one not known what it really was, the deception would undoubtedly have been complete, for there was the ocean sleeping in placid calmness under the scorching heat, the surrounding coast-line reflected in the clear, cool water. A few fishing-boats were becalmed a little distance out, whilst some shrimpers were busy with their nets close to the shore. It was so complete a picture, and so impressed me, that I halted the caravan whilst I made a sketch. The relief to the eye on leaving the lake

and finding oneself in comparatively mountainous scenery was very pleasant, and the district I was now entering was certainly the most picturesque I had ever seen.

A turn in the rocky road brought us suddenly in sight of the Mount Margaret Reward Claim Mine, which stood a little distance back from the track in a sort of valley, and presented a busy *coup d'œil* in striking contrast to its surroundings. I was disappointed to learn that the manager, Captain Paul, was away at the moment at another mine, the "Newman's Quartz Hill" Mine, twenty-five miles farther north, and was not expected back for some days. The assistant manager, with the usual hospitality of the country, at once suggested that, after my hot and dusty ride, I must be both thirsty and hungry, and insisted on preparing me some lunch, and meanwhile gave me without delay the most exquisite drink of icy cold condensed water and limejuice I think I ever tasted. It was indeed nectar to my parched throat.

After an excellent meal, he suggested that, with my riding camels only, we could easily get over to Newman's Quartz Hill before dark, and so catch Captain Paul, and also have an opportunity of seeing that mine also. I therefore settled to go; so, leaving the black boy behind to look after the baggage and the pack camels, I took Scott with me and we set off at a sharp trot with four hours to do twenty-five miles in.

Without relaxing the quick pace for more than a few minutes, I kept hard at it all the afternoon through country which, once past Mount Margaret, was the counterpart of all I had seen weeks before, and towards

MOUNT MARGARET REWARD CLAIM MINE.

dusk, as I was beginning to feel I had had about enough of it, I at length came in sight of the camp, and where in a few minutes I was welcomed in the true Western Australian fashion. Visitors, more especially from the old country, are rare in these remote places, so when they turn up they are made much of. In this instance, I learnt they had heard I was on my way up-country, so were almost expecting me. I was fortunate in meeting not only Captain Paul, but also Mr. Thomas Newman, the plucky prospector of the hill which bears his name—in fact, I learnt I was to be his guest. These two gentlemen, and a "pal" of theirs named Frank, made up as sympathetic and jolly a crew as could well be imagined, and I realised I was in for a good time of it, and so it turned out. A really well-cooked supper, washed down by "something soothing," and followed by a good cigar, made one forget the rough experiences of the past few days. On mentioning casually the unpleasantness I had to put up with since leaving Hannans, and my intention to get rid of Scott at any cost, my delight may be imagined when I learnt that Mr. Newman was himself going down to Menzies almost directly, and would be very pleased if I would join him, whereupon, to crown my good luck, Captain Paul offered to lend me a couple of his own camels for the journey, so that I should be quite independent of my surly camel-man, and therefore in a position to discharge him without any reference to the camels he was looking after. This so simplified matters that when I turned in after my pleasant evening it was to go to sleep, feeling that my troubles were at an end.

A look round the little camp by daylight revealed

picturesque surroundings very unexpected from the first glimpse I got on my arrival the preceding evening. It certainly was the most typical bush encampment I had as yet seen, and quite "stagey" in effect, so much so in fact that I felt if it could be reproduced as it stood on the boards of Drury Lane, in one of the big autumn dramas, it would be a huge success. Once this idea started in my mind I could almost imagine Harry Nicholls or Henry Neville turning up on camels with the good news from the "old country," which would be certain to be the only reason of their appearance at the hero's camp out in the bush just at the right moment, so I ended by making a careful sketch of the spot, in case it should come in handy some day for Sir Augustus Harris.

After breakfast I had a stroll over the property, which struck me as being quite as rich as anything I had seen hitherto, the reef being of particularly good-looking quartz, and showing gold freely in most of the pieces I picked up casually. Of course at the time of my visit, only prospecting work had been done, though from the almost scientific manner in which this had been carried out, it was evidently not the work of novices.

An adjoining claim, the "Great Jumbo," which I looked at *en passant*, also struck me as immensely rich, in fact gold seemed everywhere and in everything.

A great advantage enjoyed in mining operations out in these more distant places is that fresh water is found in abundance, in many cases even in the shafts.

I got back to the camp as "hungry as a hunter," after my long and tiring walk over the rocky ground,

and found Frank had prepared a dinner which was a marvel of "bush" cooking, and proved that he was quite a "chef." It was certainly a revelation as to what can be done with tinned food, and we did ample justice to it.

As Captain Paul and Mr. Newman could not start till the next day, we whiled away the afternoon as best we could with a little rifle practice on an adjoining hill.

Next morning we all made an early start on our return to "Mount Margaret," the captain and Frank riding two sturdy ponies, Mr. Newman with his camels.

It had been decided to postpone telling Scott of my new plans till I got back to the mine, so that he should have no chance of meditating some underhand trick on me, of which he seemed quite capable. The fellow's astonishment at the turn affairs had taken was delightful; all his insolence disappeared when he learnt that I was now quite independent of both him and his camels, and he looked like a whipped cur when informed that his services were no longer required, and the sooner he cleared out the better. As I had imagined, he refused to let even the camels I had hired, much less those lent to me by the warden, to proceed without him, so there was no option but to send all back to Hannans, and in less than half-an-hour of our return to the mine, therefore, the fellow was on his way down country again, and I was rid of the most uncivil and surly brute it has ever been my luck to run against anywhere.

All that day was spent visiting the mine, which

proved to be the richest I had yet seen in the whole of my tour, that is to say, if "seeing is believing."

I was astounded at the magnificence of the stone lying about round the shafts. In colour and substance it reminded me very much of the formation of the "Hannans Brownhill," a sort of schist or decomposed ironstone, though much more brilliant in colouring, and to all appearance positively crammed with fine gold; not a piece could I take up without it being a specimen.

I spent an hour rummaging over the heaps of stone round the main shaft, so fascinated at finding gold practically lying about, as it were, loose, that I could not tear myself away, but kept on turning the lumps over and over, at each movement making fresh discoveries.

So impressed was I at what I saw, that I got Captain Paul—*pour passer le temps*—to have "dollied" for me half-a-dozen pieces of stone I had picked up at different places on the property, just for the sake of seeing if there really was so much in them as I had imagined. The result proved all of the samples to be so extraordinarily rich, that on asking Captain Paul what they ought each to run to the ton, he confessed himself as unable to give an idea, adding though, "that in his private opinion Mount Margaret would one day be as big a show as anything at Hannans, which was saying a great deal. That this was known in London was proved by the fact that the shares were held so tightly that but few could be got anywhere," he added.

Water, which has always proved so big a drawback farther south, is here to be obtained positively *ad lib.*, and only slightly brackish in taste, whilst in a few

shafts they were sinking I learnt that they had that morning struck "fresh water." The value of this was too obvious to be dilated on, and the captain, I could see, was radiant in consequence, though he is too old and experienced a mine manager to be given to showing his feelings.

Taking all in all, my visit to "Mount Margaret" turned out to be well worth the long and tedious journey, and not to have come so far north would have been to have missed seeing perhaps the most interesting and promising amongst the many mining districts of Western Australia.

CHAPTER XV.

MENZIES.

Mr. Newman and I go to Menzies—"Niagara" mining camp—Hotel at Menzies—The principal mines—The "Friday" Mine—Water question in Menzies—The "Lady Shenton" Mine.

RETURNING FROM WORK: A SKETCH AT THE "FRIDAY" MINE.

My preparations for the one hundred miles from the Mount Margaret Mine to Menzies did not take long, as it was merely a question of re-packing my baggage on the camels lent to me by Captain Paul. The journey I had now before me was comparatively so short that under the altered conditions it promised to be quite a *parti de plaisir*, as compared with the other portions of the route; and so it proved, for I found Mr. Newman a most delightful companion,

and ever on the alert to give me the advantage of his "bush" experience, and so saved me many of the petty discomforts I had hitherto put up with.

We passed many indications of the presence of the prospector, and halted for a few hours to have a look round a mine called the "Princess Alix," and also at a mining camp called "Niagara," both of which, from all accounts, have brilliant futures before them. Owing to a few inevitable delays on the way, we only did sixty miles the first three days, but made up for this amply by the fine finish of a forty-mile ride the last day into Menzies.

Here I bade adieu to my camels, a farewell which was not a very affecting one, as may be imagined, my experience of these animals not being one of unmixed bliss. As far as I myself was concerned, with the recollection of what I had once undergone in the Gobi Desert, I was almost inclined to give the palm for ill-humour to the Asiatic animal, though I trust all the same this parting at Menzies will sever my connection for ever with the "ship of the desert." Life is too short for this means of travel in these hurry-scurry days of the end of the nineteenth century.

Although a comparatively new township, Menzies has gone ahead wonderfully during the few months it has been in existence; and whilst, of course, not nearly so advanced as Coolgardie, or even Hannans, bids fair in a very short time to rival both.

The few natural advantages which just make life bearable in either of the other famous "camps" are here wanting, and Menzies, knee-deep in dust, with water expensive, as usual, and myriads of flies, is, as may be imagined, not a desirable place for pleasant

residence during the hot summer months. Yet that it is the centre of perhaps one of the richest of the many rich goldfields in the district is an undisputed fact, and one which will enable the occupants of the town, in the not far distant future, to snap their fingers at all these discomforts, and to make Menzies a town at all events fit to stay in, for gold will do almost anything, and certainly help Menzies to make up for what Nature has denied her.

I put up at a rough, though well managed, embryo hotel, kept by a Miss Robson, a charming lady, whose delightful personality conduced not a little to our comforts whilst under her roof. One has to find oneself out in these rough places to thoroughly realise the soothing influence of a gentle woman's presence, and I feel sure that all who have had any experience of life in the backwoods will thoroughly endorse this.

The township, owing to the marvellous rapidity with which events have shaped themselves recently, has already far outgrown its intended proportions, and a sale of the town sites had realised such enormous profits on the original prices as to prove, beyond a doubt, the value attached to Menzies as the centre of another huge and growing mining district.

Of course the principal sights of all these places are the mines, which brought these camps into existence, and naturally these present the greatest interest to the visitor

In the case of Menzies, "the finds" of the neighbourhood are situated within a stone's throw of the town, and therefore of quite easy access as compared with others I had visited.

The two principal groups of mines—for I believe they are working conjointly—are the mines known as the "Lady Shenton" and "Florence," and the properties of the "Menzies Gold Reefs Proprietary," which includes the "Friday," "Crusoe," and "Selkirk" mines.

All of these enormously rich fields were in the first instance "pegged out" by Mr. Menzies, the lucky prospector of the district, and who has thus found his

MINERS' CAMP, LADY SHENTON MINE.

name immortalised. That these are the representative mines of the entire district is indisputable.

When their machinery is erected, that they will make a big sensation, even amongst the many in Western Australia which will also startle the world when they begin crushing, cannot be doubted, more especially if the evidence of one's own eyesight, and what one hears on all sides, is to be believed.

The manner in which it has been found necessary to cut up, as it were, the properties, sub-dividing them as they developed into proportions undreamt of when first taken over by the London Syndicate, is in itself sufficient proof of the fabulous wealth of mineral the cutting of the shafts has disclosed; and it is rumoured that those who are in the "know," prophesy as big a future for Menzies as for Hannans. With all this in my memory it may be imagined the interest which this visit promised to present, for I had seen Hannans in three weeks, from a tiny, undeveloped township, with scarcely a soul in its deserted main street, grow into an important and flourishing centre with such a host of mines, speculators, and others as recalled, so I was told, the old days of Ballarat.

Menzies, from all accounts, would also in a very few weeks be attracting its busy crowds; and already that indescribable hum of a rapidly growing place was discernible on all sides, and more particularly evidenced by the growing number of leases being taken up every day.

I strolled across to the mines after breakfast the day following our arrival, and although I felt, from an artistic point of view, the place was hopeless, still the inconvenience of the dust and the heat, and the total absence of any shadow of relief from the blinding glare, was made up for by the interest of the place from a mining point of view.

The first shaft I reached—for the poppet heads formed quite a landmark—was that of the "Friday" Mine.

My card proved the usual open sesame, and I was

most cordially received by the manager, Mr. Jowett, who courteously offered to show me over the property.

Although the battery was not yet up at the time of my visit, the place represented an extremely busy and animated scene, for the winding plant and a steam saw-mill were in full swing and energy, and evidently the order of the day.

AN AWKWARD MOMENT.

To all outward appearance the mine presented the usual characteristics of the many I had already visited and described, and so not being a mining expert with a "Report" to make, I will not endeavour to find other words or phrases to enable me to traverse old ground in a new garb. Of course I went down to see the underground workings, making the descent of about one hundred feet by a novel method: that of "walking" down the under-lay shaft. "Climbing" in a sort of sitting posture, half doubled up, down a long, steep hole into the bowels of the earth is a distinctly novel sensation, and though, perhaps, not calculated to improve the fit or appearance of one's garments, at

any rate affords a considerable amount of excitement to the novice in such matters. As I have before remarked, my gymnastic days are long gone by, so although by this time I was getting quite accustomed to mining shafts and their little peculiarities, I felt that, at any rate, this was something new.

The idea of thus cutting the shaft on the "slant" was, I learned, in order that the reef which has been cut and found running at an angle, may be followed down, and its extent thus determined.

In this particular case I learnt that the entire wall on one side all the way down was composed of highly auriferous quartz, in fact so rich that the manager told me with a laugh that he preferred to say very little about it at present, as he might be thought to be exaggerating if he stated how many ounces he knew for certain it would go to the ton when washed.

A characteristic of this formation was its peculiar colour, which reminded me very much of rich brawn. This, the manager informed me, was the principal peculiarity of the phenomenally rich mine at "Charters Towers," in Queensland, of one of which he had once been the manager.

The gold in this particular class of stone does not, I further learnt, show so freely to the naked eye as in the lode formation of the Hannans district. It is not a good mine for "specimens" (which is perhaps not a fault), still there was no difficulty in seeing the precious metal glistening here and alongside of us as we slid more or less gracefully down the shaft.

The drives presented the usual features with which I was now somewhat familiar, and after a stroll round

we returned to the surface by the main shaft, being hauled up in the bucket, a means which is pleasant enough if you can manage to keep the rope from turning round, otherwise you reach daylight as though you had spent a few minutes on a very rapid roasting "jack," with sensations the reverse of pleasant. I learnt from the manager, that the water question, which has always been one of such moment in Menzies, appears likely to be solved successfully very shortly, a big company being on the point of flotation to bring water from "Lake Barlee," some seven miles distant.

The pumping machinery for this big undertaking was supplied by the "Otis" Company of Melbourne, and the pipes by a Scotch firm. All will be ready, it is anticipated, by the time the various mines have their batteries erected.

Meanwhile, in this and the "Lady Shenton" mine, a certain amount of water was obtainable at a depth, and so slightly impregnated with salt, as to not affect the boilers.

"The great thing out here," remarked Mr. Jowett, as we strolled back to his office, I having accepted his irresistible invitation to join him in a whisky and soda, "is to develop the mines thoroughly, so that if one part proves more patchy than another, the results can be equalised. I may say that, in my opinion, after many years of practical experience, it is no good breaking one's heart because in one place, perhaps, the gold does not hold out. These *contretemps* are inevitable in gold-mining, for a few yards farther on, in an adjoining shaft, the result is almost certain to counterbalance it.

"The great advantage the Menzies district enjoys over most others, is that the ground is as cheap to work as any I have seen in the Colonies, this being particularly noticeable, when prospecting parties are out, by the amount of ground they get over in an incredibly short time, in fact, it is all what they term in mining parlance, 'picking ground,' and little or no explosion is required for nearly two hundred feet. The one great drawback we have to contend with at the present moment," added Mr. Jowett, "is the dearth of miners, owing to the enormous success of prospectors in different parts of the Colony: no sooner does a man manage to save up £50 or so, than off he goes on his own account to try and find a fortune, with the result, we are continually wanting new hands."

I then paid a visit to the "Lady Shenton" Mine, which immediately adjoins the "Friday," and was received with equal cordiality by Mr. Beaumont, its manager.

The general characteristics and formation of the reef presented features so precisely similar to the mine I had just quitted, that any description of it would be but a repetition.

Mr. Beaumont was equally enthusiastic about the future of his charge, and "although," he remarked, "that whilst of course no miner can see beyond the end of his drill, still the indications, combined with results already achieved, proved in his mind beyond a doubt that Menzies would yield to none in the point of wealth of gold-bearing reefs."

CHAPTER XVI.

FROM MENZIES BACK TO COOLGARDIE, SOUTHERN CROSS AND GUILFORD.

Coaching in Western Australia—The journey from Menzies to Coolgardie—Emus—At Coolgardie once more—The Londonderry Mine—Barrabin—Southern Cross—Progress of the Government Railway—From Southern Cross to Guilford.

ONCE the principal attractions of Menzies, *i.e.* the mines, had been appreciated, there remained little to tempt one to prolong one's stay in so hot and dusty a town, and I was not sorry when the day arrived for taking my departure by the coach for Coolgardie.

The journey between the two places occupied about two days, and I will not further dilate on the discomfort and *ennui* of the route, than to mention *en passant* that it presented the usual unpleasant features of Australian coaching, which I fully described in a previous chapter. What, however, I cannot refrain from enlarging on, as it may be of interest to the authorities and also to future travellers, is the altogether tyrannical treatment passengers by any of the lines of coaches have to put up with, either on the part of the proprietors or the drivers, probably both. In all my experience I never met anything like it, and considering the exorbitant fares charged, it occurs to one

that the poor passenger is entitled to at least a semblance of regard; for, after all, it is not his fault, but his misfortune to have to travel by the coach at all. I will give an instance of what I mean, and this example will apparently stand good for all lines. The coach was advertised to leave Menzies at six o'clock in the morning, and 5.30 is an unearthly hour at which to have breakfast, for it means getting up long before that time. When, therefore, after bolting a bit of tough steak and gulping down a cup of boiling tea, you hurry over to the coaching office to find that not only are there no signs of any one moving, but also that the driver has not even condescended to arise from his sweet slumbers, and eventually you discover that it is close on eight o'clock before the horses put in an appearance, it is apt to make an even more patient man than myself use fairly strong language. This is not all. Imagine starting at this hour and at ten o'clock stopping at a wayside inn where fresh horses are obtained, to be told that we remain there till one o'clock for dinner. Fortunately I found enough work to occupy me during this long wait, but my fellow-passengers were mad at the delay, and passed the time fuming with rage, yet there was no remedy. Either the driver or the proprietors have an arrangement with the innkeepers, and possibly get a commission on the dinners, so certain inns are more favoured than others, and the passengers suffer.

The journey from Menzies to Coolgardie, which occupied something like eighteen hours, without reckoning the stoppage for night and other delays, could easily have been done in a day.

The road into the capital, as Coolgardie appears now worthy of being entitled, was crowded with teams, and I was continually passing boilers and other big machinery bound for the mining districts I had recently visited, a sure sign that the excessive charges for freight had already been lowered with the advance of the railway.

Several important and rising mining camps close to the road helped to give life to the monotonous bush; whilst at the place called the "Ninety-miles" stage from Coolgardie, presumably because it is only seventy-six miles, and another called the "Forty-two," really thirty-four, were batteries in full swing, and the results I learned were in every way satisfactory.

On the road we saw two emus, the first I had seen in the Colony. They did not appear to be particularly shy, as they kept their way along the road by the side of the coach for some little time.

I was not sorry to get back to Coolgardie again after my long tour; and when after a change and a good wash to get rid of the dust, I sat down to an excellent dinner at the Denver Hotel, it seemed like nearing home once more.

Although only a little over two months had elapsed since I had left it, the change an all sides was astounding, and in itself sufficiently proved the enormous strides the goldfields are making, for Coolgardie had grown into a big place. Crowds of well-dressed people, amongst whom many ladies, were in the streets, the sound of music was heard, and only the electric light was wanting to make the transformation complete.

I had arranged to finish my journey down to the railway by the first coach, as I had decided to conclude

my peep at the goldfields by a trip up the Murchison, and the arrangements left me a day to spare in Coolgardie. I thought this time could not be better or more instructively occupied than by a visit to the famous (?) Londonderry Mine.

A friend drove me out in his buggy, and I found it was about nine miles from Coolgardie to the mine. It struck me that the road, which was practically deserted, presented, in its straightness, a curious contrast to that leading to Hannans, another now well-known centre. Yet all along this road were still to be seen evidences of continued perseverance by plodding prospectors who work on doggedly in a hope of striking another "pocket" such as made and unmade the "Londonderry."

PROSPECTORS.

A turn in the road at length brought us in sight of a small group of iron huts, in the midst of which was a little five-head battery at work. The smallness of the whole thing was striking. On my presenting my card, the manager somehow did not seem so pleased to see me as I expected he would. Why, I do not know or

imagine, for after all, it is not his fault that the mine is the only "wild cat" up to the present put before a confiding British public, whilst for all any one knows, at any moment another "pocket" might be struck. Still he somehow appeared to resent my visit, so I had but little encouragement to prolong it.

I was shown the "golden hole" which was the original *raison d'être* of the big company, and the other parts of the property, also an exceedingly rich safeful of specimens which equalled anything I had been shown anywhere, though, of course, I could not lose sight of the fact that they were "specimens."

On my way back I pondered over what I had just seen, and came to the conclusion in my own mind that with more energy better results could possibly be achieved, as for a low-grade stone, such as the Londonderry has turned out, a five-head battery appears ridiculously insignificant, whilst surely there must be enough capital available to push the mine at all hazards, and there ought to be at least fifty head of stamps at work, and development pushed forward with ever-increasing energy.

I left the following morning *en route* for the railway, which since my arrival, some two months previously, had made big strides forward, and was now within sixty miles of Coolgardie, my coach journey was thus considerably abbreviated.

The change I had been so impressed with in the big town was, if anything, more marked on the road, and the traffic seemed endless. Not only were coaches packed with passengers continually passing us, but even the teams had travellers on them, whilst the fair

sex showed everywhere, and helped to brighten up the sombre crowd.

At Barrabin, the halfway-house, where I halted for the night, there was quite a little mob of people waiting for the next coach, amongst whom were many typical English "new chums," and I learnt that there were

BARRABIN.

quite thirty who had been waiting for some days in this way.

Meanwhile, the railway was being pushed forward with feverish activity, and was then scarcely three miles from this place. The next morning I only had a short drive of about this distance to the head of the line, when I embarked on a train of "material trucks," and was conveyed like "goods" to the terminus at Southern Cross. Still, undignified as was this method

of railway travelling, it was delightful in comparison to the tedium of the coach journey; and the rate of twenty miles an hour, which we were doing, was absolutely "express" in comparison.

The contractors, Messrs. Wilkie Brothers, have dropped into a "soft thing" in getting the contract for the line, for by the terms of their agreement with the Government their contract does not expire till July, 1896, and in the event of the line, or any portion of it, being completed before that date, are to enjoy the entire monopoly of the passenger and goods traffic on it.

The contract was made at the remarkably low rate of £500 per mile (the Government supplying the rails), and had it not been for this clause the line could never have been constructed, except at a very big loss. As it is, the contractors evidently realised this beforehand, and put in as much labour as they possibly could, in order to run through the work, with the result that by Christmas the entire route was complete, and the shrewd contractors will thus have had fully six months in which to recoup themselves out of the passenger and goods traffic for their remarkably low tender.

It may be of interest to mention, in order to give an idea how quickly the work has been done, that in some places all was complete at the rate of one mile per day.

Southern Cross was itself, to all appearances, already a thing of the past, and by the time this goes to press the entire township will probably have shifted; for the few miles of country round about are not of sufficient importance to enable store-keepers to resist the attraction farther north, though there are rumours that all is not yet over in this quarter by any means, and that the

crushings of several of the mines, notably that at "Mount Jackson," will astound the mining world very shortly.

From Southern Cross I went on by train to Guilford, a delightful little agricultural district, where I proposed spending a few quiet days whilst getting through with my work, already much in abeyance, and being thus on the Midland Railway line, I could take the train for Mullowa *en route* for the Murchison at any moment.

CHAPTER XVII.

A PEEP AT GERALDTON AND THE MURCHISON DISTRICT.

A few days' rest at Guilford—The journey to Cue, the capital of the Murchison district—The port of Geraldton—Mullowa—Water in the Colony of Western Australia—The townships of "Yalgoo" and "Mount Magnet"—The "Island" mining district—Sport in the Murchison district—Post-houses—The "Day Dawn" Mine—The town of Cue—Water-supply and hotels at Cue—Conclusion.

A FEW days in the charming sylvan surroundings of Guilford, with unlimited fresh milk, new-laid eggs, vegetables, and other luxuries, were sufficient to pull me round, and almost made me forget the unpleasant experiences of the bush; for it undoubtedly takes much less time to get re-accustomed to one's ordinary method of life than to get reconciled even to ever so short a period of roughing it; and as I lounged about the shady verandah, whilst smoking my cigar after dinner, the feeling of relief at having no utensils to wash up, and no bed to make, was almost a sufficient repayment for experiencing hardships.

From Perth to Cue, the capital of the Murchison district, though only a distance of about seven hundred miles, occupies no less than four days, and even much

longer if the connecting link in the train and coach service is missed. The first stage is from Perth to Geraldton on the Midland Railway, which takes about sixteen hours, thence by coach to Cue, occupying three days and two nights.

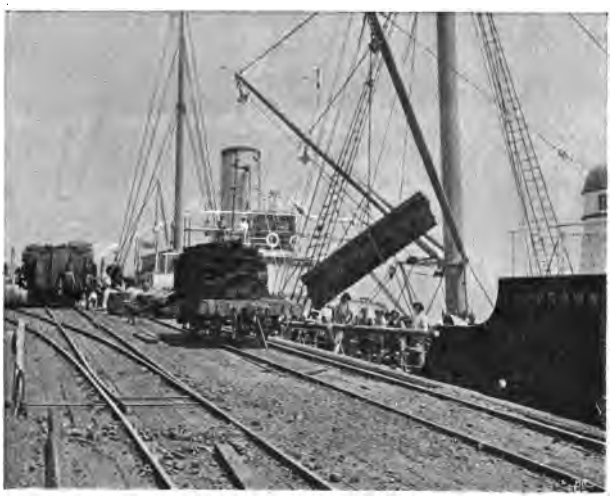
I had heard it remarked, and very smartly, I thought, that Western Australia is a lovely country "to sleep

VIEW NEAR GUILFORD.

through," and even for that reason the advent of the railway would be a boon. I had had so much "bushing it" during the past two months, that I was no sooner comfortably ensconced in the corner of a first-class compartment of the train than I at once realised the truth of this remark, and slept soundly and delightfully through many a weary mile of country undoubtedly precisely similar to what I have already so often described; for although some hundreds of miles from

the Coolgardie district, the scenery presented exactly the same characteristics, and therefore offered no attraction whatever in the shape of novelty.

Geraldton was reached late that night, and I put up at a fairly comfortable hostelry named the "Freemasons'." I found here that I had missed the "connecting link," and so had thirty-six hours to spare, as



ON THE QUAY, GERALDTON.

the train to Mullowa only runs three times a week. For this I was not sorry, as it gave me an opportunity to see this rising and interesting port.

To wake up next morning and find oneself overlooking the sea, and with a bracing salt breeze coming in at the open window, was simply delightful; so I hurried through my toilet, in order to make the most of my short stay in the place.

The first effect Geraldton produced on me was that of some old Italian town, and its picturesque appearance being in marked contrast to the corrugated iron huts which so pall on one up at the "fields," several fine buildings giving a good *ensemble* to the streets. Being the outlet for all the immense agricultural, pastoral and mineral districts round, as well as being the nearest point to the Murchison goldfields, Geraldton can be looked upon, perhaps, as the most important port on this part of the coast.

With a population of about fifteen thousand, which is continually increasing, there can be but little doubt that in a very few years it will be a large and thriving city, and the metropolis of one of the most energetic provinces of Western Australia. There is a regular service of steamers between it and the northern and southern parts of the Colony. The fine steamships of Messrs. Huddart, Parker & Co., Alfred Holt's "Blue Funnel Line," Messrs. Trinder, Anderson & Co., and "The Adelaide Steamship Company" making this their port of call, the harbour being large and easy of entrance by night or day. Big harbour works are projected, and when complete will allow of the largest boats to come close up to the town.

When the time arrived to catch the train for Mullowa, I had done the "lions" of Geraldton, that is to say, I managed to get a rough sketchy idea of the place, and was much interested in it.

From Geraldton to Mullowa the first portion of the route presented a certain amount of interest, from the fact of the line skirting the seashore for a short distance; but after this comes the usual bush-covered

POLICE BRINGING IN NATIVE PRISONERS FROM AN OUTLYING DISTRICT.

plains, and sleeping is the only pleasant method of whiling away the time.

Mullowa is not unlike Southern Cross, only worse for the flies: the heat and the dust make it almost unbearable. I had to stay a night there, the coach leaving next morning, and certainly the "hotel" was in keeping with its surroundings, being the most filthy and uncomfortable place imaginable, though clean in comparison to what one has to put up with on the road to Cue and in that town itself. The coach journey, a distance of 290 miles, occupies three days and two nights, and is accomplished in the most ramshackle vehicle ever dignified with the name of coach. For the return journey the excessively modest charge of £15 is made. Comment on this extortion is needless, more especially as the railway will soon be along the route, and so bring the coach proprietors to a proper sense of their own importance.

Western Australia, as you will long ere this have remarked, is not a country prolific in either artistic or literary materials, for once one part has been described it will in most instances have to suffice for the whole. Here and there, it is true, are slight variations, certain trees being only indigenous to certain areas, this being the case with shrubs and wild flowers, whilst rocks and barren howling wastes are found on all sides; but as *ensemble* the effect is everywhere the same and the impression is gloomy in the extreme. Perhaps the one relieving feature on this road is the comparative abundance of water. At any rate this appeared to me to be the case, for "soaks" and "wells" were all well stocked at the time. I learnt, however, that this was in a

great measure owing to exceptionally heavy rain during the preceding winter, and that although water is never altogether scarce as in other parts of the Colony, it was not always so plentiful. The quality of this water varied very considerably, in some places being quite brackish, in others delightfully fresh and drinkable. It was curious to note how, in spite of this—for Western Australia—unusual abundance of water, the prolonged drought had affected the trees. In many districts I passed through, there had not been, I learnt, a good "season" for rain for nearly *eight years*, and, in consequence, on thousands of acres the trees had died from want of water. It was a depressing sight, these miles of dead trees, and gave a good idea of the enormous natural difficulties the agriculturist would have to overcome out here.

In spite, however, of the general uninteresting aspect there were here and there "bits," as it were, which afforded some welcome contrast, and, if only for this reason, made the route slightly less wearisome, though they scarcely compensated for the long and tiring journey.

At the little townships of "Yalgoo" and "Mount Magnet" we stopped to change horses, and remained long enough at each place to get a sort of rough idea of the mines of the district. Of course it goes without saying that out here everbody's individual mine or district is the most promising. One does not need to stay out here long to find out that. I was therefore somewhat agreeably surprised to notice that the reefs in both these places appeared to be composed of identical stone, as far as [illegible] I can

PUTTING UP A BATTERY.

but hope for the two places that this may turn out to be really the case, for then their fortunes are assured.

I also passed two other mining districts which have been recently prominent before the public, namely, the "Island," in the centre of Lake Austin, on which I learnt are several flourishing concerns, amongst them the "Austin," "Golconda," and "Eureka," and the "Mainland" which from all accounts is going to turn out the "Great Boulder" of the Murchison. At most of these they had all their machinery up, and batteries could be heard on all sides. The Murchison district appears to have got out of the "developing" stage much more rapidly than the Coolgardie fields. Perhaps this may be owing to freight on this side having always been lower, and in consequence of water and horse feed being easily obtainable on the road. Sport was evidently to be had almost everywhere, for we saw many kangaroos, wild turkeys (bustards), wild duck and quail, whilst round many of the pools were ibis and cranes. All this was an improvement, on the Coolgardie road, where no sign of life of any sort, beyond an occasional green parrot, ever disturbed the stillness of the bush. On the road itself were also noticeable now and again subjects worthy of a sketch, such as, for instance, heavy carts drawn by teams of camels or oxen.

About the "post-houses," where we changed horses and usually stopped for meals, the less said the better, for, with but one exception, they were the worst I have seen in the country, which is saying a great deal. I had to sleep at two of them. One was excellent in its way as a "bush-pub.," the other merely consisted of a few Hessian cloth huts, infested with flies, and so hot

and dirty as to make sleeping on the ground out in the open air preferable to the stuffy interior. All this was, as may be imagined, "roughing it" with a vengeance; still, both coming and going, we were a lively crew on board the coach, for on both occasions ladies were with us, and it is, therefore, almost unnecessary to add that they, in a great measure, conduced to render agreeable what would otherwise have been an exceedingly unpleasant trip.

A CAMEL TEAM.

Some four miles before Cue is reached, and constituting, as it were, a suburb of the metropolis of the Murchison, is the "Day Dawn" mining camp. Here is situated the property which has given the name to the place, and one of the most famous of the many big "claims" of the district. Having visited so many of the principal mines on the "other side," as the Coolgardie district is here termed, I naturally desired to see what they had to show over here, so I broke my journey and made my way up to the works.

Standing on the brow of a hill, and domineering the

A POST-HOUSE ON THE ROAD TO CUE.

small township which has sprung up around it, the "Day Dawn" Mine presents quite an imposing appearance, and looks more like "business" than any I had yet seen in the Colony.

Mr. Knuston and Captain Wallace, who look after the interests of the big English syndicate which owns the property, received me with what might by that time be termed the customary courtesy; for, with one

DAY DAWN MINE.

exception, I had always found mine managers out here only too anxious to assist me in my work, and, at the same time, back up their kindness with the greatest hospitality.

"The Day Dawn Reef" is perhaps one of the most phenomenally large and well defined, not only in the Murchison district, but in all Western Australia, and there are many years of workable stone in sight. It is of a mottled bluish colour, and, though not what one could call a sensational lode, it is a good solid old-fashioned kind of mine, which, from all accounts, will pay dividends for a long time to come; and, since it

has been working steadily now for two-and-a-half years, with always the same average returns, its stability appears assured. It may be of interest to mention that they are using here Sulman's new bromo-cyanide process for extracting the gold. By this means I believe the most refractory ore is satisfactorily treated.

Although "Day Dawn" is only a suburb of Cue, it is amusing to learn the amount of jealousy which exists between the two places, it being said that the first has the principal mines, but that the second is in the proud

CUE.

position of having not only a mayor and the Government offices, but also, amongst its residents, the warden of the district. No wonder they are at daggers drawn.

The town of Cue itself reminded me very much of Coolgardie. It looks, indeed, like a slice of Bayley Street, without the bustle and life, however, which is so characteristic of that town. There are, however, many more mines close to the principal thoroughfare. Several of the houses are built of stone, which gives it a more finished appearance, but the iron roofs take one

THE DEPARTURE OF THE MAIL-COACH, CUE.

buildings, in course of erection, promise, when finished, to be a fairly handsome block (for Cue); but the architecture is too undecided, and the effect too straggling for the result to be considered quite an artistic success. A feature of this place is the church, for, up in the goldfields, places of worship are few and far between, the drinking saloon being the temple, and the name of the god is Gold. The building, which is small and unpretentious, has stone walls, into which are let in, at intervals, specimens from various surrounding mines, and in the bright sunlight the gold glistens with a very curious effect, as may be imagined. In the interior of the building the altar and the cross are also made of gold ore, the pieces forming the latter being exceptionally rich and valuable. All these specimens are presented by mine-owners and others in the district. I recommend this charming sentiment to other places on the Coolgardie side of the fields when they have time to think of building churches.

Water is fairly plentiful all round Cue, and, though somewhat brackish in taste, is, I believe, wholesome enough when one gets used to it. The first taste produces symptoms the reverse of agreeable. For mining purposes it is, of course, capital, and considerably lessens the cost of working the fields. The principal drawback appears to be the scarcity of good timber. The mulgar-tree, which is the principal growth of the surrounding bush, is practically useless for mining purposes. Many of the principal companies, however, have introduced iron for the poppet heads, so that the difficulty may be obviated.

The hotels at Cue are not yet on a par with those on

the "other side." It is probably in no small measure, owing to the disregard of many sanitary measures, that fever was more prevalent at Cue, at the time of my visit, than in any other town I have been to. It was a bad place to be in, I soon discovered, unless one were in the soundest of health. I had intended spending some little time there, and making a careful tour of the surrounding district as far as Nannine, for, from all accounts, the country everywhere "reeks" with gold, and big finds are being made daily. Symptoms, however, of a serious character developing in me, as the result of dysentery, caused me, on medical advice, to curtail my tour and make all haste back to the capital. It was provoking, but could not be helped, though I had the consolation of at least being able to get a glimpse of the Murchison. My return thus completed my trip through Western Australia.

It had been my intention, on starting from England, to write a series of articles which would form a full and comprehensive work on the Colony; but a very few weeks out there convinced me of the hopelessness of such a task, not from the point of view of its magnitude, but from the fact that the entire country is, at the present moment, practically in a state of transition, and, therefore, cannot be, if I may use the term, "written up" with any degree of accuracy. It is, of course, highly interesting to note the vast strides Western Australia has made during the past few months, solely as the result of the unprecedented success of the "fields," for it would be idle to deny that this remarkable era of prosperity is due to any

other cause than the search for gold. New towns, and even districts, have sprung up as if by magic. Where, even seven months ago, at the time of my visit, the greater part of the Colony was but untraversed "bush," and, by the time this goes to press, famous and flourishing mining "camps" will fill up the blank spaces on the maps of the Colony, and still further help to increase the popularity of what is, in my opinion, likely to become the biggest gold-bearing country in the world.

Owing to these circumstances, and to the fact that I went out simply as an artist and journalist, and not as a mining expert, it will be readily understood, that for me to make an attempt at anything but a series of sketchy notes on Western Australia would have been presumption. As a matter of fact, most of the notes I made during my interesting tour are even now practically obsolete, so rapidly have events shaped themselves in this go-ahead Colony. My hasty impressions and jottings must, therefore, only be taken as intended to give the English reader a peep, as it were, into this vast and even now but little known continent.

A MINING TOWNSHIP—MURCHISON DISTRICT.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

Conditions under which Lands within Agricultural Areas are open for Selection.

Free Homestead Farms—"Homesteads Act, 1893," *and "Amending Act,* 1894."

Any person who is the sole head of a family, or a male of eighteen years of age or over, and who does not already hold over 100 acres of land, may apply for any Crown land in the South-Western Division of the Colony set apart in an agricultural area, or situated within 40 miles of a railway, or which has been set apart as a special area, in either the Eastern or Eucla Divisions of the Colony, as a free homestead farm, subject to the under-mentioned conditions :—

Application in either case must be made on the prescribed form, accompanied by a fee of £1. On approval an occupation certificate is issued within six months from the date of which the selector shall take personal possession of the land, and shall reside thereon for at least six months during each of the first five years of occupancy.

In certain cases of illness, or for other valid reasons, absence may be allowed, and forfeiture waived, or the holder can be relieved of the residence condition on payment of an office fee of £1, and effecting double the expenditure on improvements.

Within two years a habitable house must be erected of not less than £30 value; or £30 expended in clearing and cropping; or two acres of orchard or vineyard properly prepared and planted. Within five years one-fourth of the land must be substantially fenced, and one-eighth cleared and cropped.

At the end of seven years, if all the conditions have been fulfilled, a Crown grant may be obtained on payment of survey and Crown grant fees; but if the conditions are not carried out, the land is forfeited.

The Crown grant may be obtained after twelve months' residence, if the required improvements have been made, and on payment of 5*s*. per acre together with the fees referred to in preceding paragraph.

A homestead farm cannot be mortgaged or transferred until all conditions entitling the holder to a Crown grant have been fulfilled.

The holder of a homestead farm may hold other land under existing Land Regulations.

Production.

The estimated acreage of the Colony is 624,560,640 acres.

The estimated acreage of land under cultivation in 1893 was 176,578 acres, as against 161,459 acres in 1892. The increase as shown, therefore, was 15,119 acres.

The average area under cultivation per head of the mean population of the Colony—

During	1880	was	2·20.
„	1885	„	2·20.
„	1890	„	2·63.
„	1891	„	2·55.
„	1892	„	2·85.
„	1893	„	2·82.

Cereals are cultivated to a considerable extent south of latitude 28°, but at present not in sufficient quantity to supply the wants of the rapidly increasing population; the wheat grown, and the grain generally, is of a superior description. With the large extent of land available for cultivation, a fast increasing population, and with the extra facilities now provided for transit to market centres, agriculture should, in the near future, make considerable progress.—*Sir Malcolm C. Fraser, 'Year Book,'* 1893–94.

Fruit-Growing.

There are tens of thousands of acres of land in the Colony suitable for fruit-growing, and it only requires capital to develop this industry. At present the supply of fruit is, to judge from the amount imported, scarcely sufficient for the wants of the Colony itself, and until more land is brought under cultivation there will be little or no fruit exported.

Oranges, which can be locally grown in any quantity, are at present largely imported from Adelaide, Melbourne, Tasmania, and elsewhere.

The cultivation of fruit requires more capital to begin with than other agriculture, and there are at present few persons in the Colony who can afford to wait a number of years before receiving a return for their outlay.

The vine grows well almost anywhere in the settled country between the Blackwood and Geraldton. Omitting unsuitable lands, there are, at a low estimate, 5000 square miles suitable for vine-growing. The citrus order also do well in the same latitude as the grape, but they require a moister soil. There is a very large extent of gravelly, loamy soil east of the Darling Range, very suitable for peach and other fruit-trees, etc.

Under a local Order in Council, dated 10th May, 1892,

it is unlawful for any person to introduce into the Colony any grapes or grape-vines, or any grape-vine cuttings except such as are the produce of the province of South Australia; and, before any such grape-vine cuttings are landed in the Colony, a certificate from some duly qualified person, or a statutory declaration by the proprietors, declaring that the vineyard from which the cuttings were produced is free from disease, must be produced to the collector or sub-collector of Customs at the port of importation; and by a further Order in Council, dated 11th May, 1894, it is required that, in order to prevent the introduction of insects, or of matter destructive to vegetation, all trees, plants, cuttings, grafts, buds, seeds, pits, scions, and fruit imported or brought from any foreign or other country, or the Australian or other British Colonies, shall, immediately on arrival at the first port of debarkation, be rigidly inspected and thoroughly disinfected before removal for distribution, or transportation, or being offered for sale or gift, and certain penalties are fixed for non-compliance with the regulations.

Under the same Order in Council all vine-cuttings imported from South Australia have to be similarly inspected and disinfected immediately on first arrival at any port in Western Australia, a penalty for omission or evasion being also in this case provided.

In 1893, therefore, the total amount of land under vines was 1642¼ acres, and the average production of wine to the acre was 113 gallons.—*Sir Malcolm C. Fraser*, '*Year Book*,' 1893–94.

Immigration.

The Government grant assisted passages to Western Australia to nominated immigrants, upon the payment of £7 10*s.* per adult by sailing vessel; children under

twelve years are half price. Fares by steamer are extra, viz., by the "Orient" line about £10 7*s*., or by direct steamer to Freemantle about £8 5*s*. Nomination forms are obtainable at the office of the Honourable the Colonial Secretary in Perth.

Free passages are only granted to female servants open to general engagement.

Assisted passages are at present only allowed to farmers, agriculturists, millers, wheelwrights, and others likely to be useful in country districts, all of whom must be possessed of some small capital. The amount required in each case is decided by the Agent-General, and must be deposited with him. As a rule a single man is required to deposit not less than £100.

During the last year there was a good demand for men in the building trade, miners, farm labourers, labourers on the railways and public works under construction, and for domestic servants.

As regards female immigration, there is a good demand generally for cooks, general servants, and laundresses, and to a less extent for dressmakers.

There is a good opening for market gardeners, poultry farmers, and fruit-growers, the soil and climate being specially suited for fruit-growing. There is also a demand for good farm hands. Farm labourers are, as a rule, boarded and lodged, and single men are preferred to married men with families. Men, in fact, can always find employment who are prepared to turn their hands to all kinds of farm and station work, or to cut down timber, or use a pick and shovel, and who do not mind roughing it in the bush. Navvies easily find employment on the various lines of railway at present constructed or in course of construction. Carpenters, joiners, bricklayers, and masons, sawyers, smiths, wheelwrights, tanners, gardeners, and others are at present in demand. The building trade

is very brisk, especially in Perth the timber stations are all busy.

The cost of living is rather high rent houses and employ servants single persons is cheap. The rent in town is 7*s.* to 10*s.*, in the co five-roomed house—in town 12*s.*, and lodging for single persons (week, and up to 30*s.* in norther *Fraser*, '*Year Book*,' 1893–94.

APPENI

Australian

Baron Ferd. von Muelle botanist, in the Introduction Resources of Western Austra

"The forest regions of occupy an area equal to t Britain, and it is singularly over this vast extent of eucalyptus (the jarrah) pre of its timber, is unsurpasse portion of the globe. Unde resources must be regard importance throughout the even if the many other kin in the most southern porti the still more varied sor within the intra-tropic reg out of consideration.

"It is furthermore of I that its highly valuable j

at least five degrees of geographic latitude, and this within so short or moderate a distance of shipping places as to render it easily accessible to foreign traffic."

And the Baron goes on to say with regard to the jarrah-tree:—

"The wood has attained a world-wide celebrity. When especially selected from hilly localities, cut while the sap is least active, and subsequently carefully dried, it proves impervious to the borings of the chelura, teredo, and termite; it is therefore in extensive demand for jetties, piles, railway sleepers, fence-posts, and all kinds of underground structures, and it is equally important as one of the most durable for the planking and frames of ships. It is also much used locally for flooring, rafters, spars, and furniture; though hard (particularly that of the ironstone ranges), it is easier worked than wood of *E. loxophleba* and *E. redunca*. The timber from hills is darker, tougher, and heavier than that from plains. The weight of well-seasoned wood is, at an average, about sixty-four pounds for the cubic foot. It is one of the least inflammable for building structures, and one of the very best in West Australia for charcoal, not burning so readily into ashes as most kinds of eucalyptus wood. Stems have been measured eighty feet to the first branch, with a circumference of thirty-two feet at five feet from the ground. For shingles the wood is doubly as durable as even that of *Casuarina Fraseriana*, though it is more apt to warp somewhat, if not well selected."

And in conclusion:—

"This much can be foreseen, that *E. marginata* is destined to supply one of the most lasting of hard-wood timbers for a long time to come, at the least costly rate, to very many parts of the globe."

Also concerning another variety of timber mentioned karri (*Eucalyptus diversicolor*):—

"In the humid country at and near
Shannon, Donelly, Walpole, and Gardner ri
the coast constituting forests, occurring also
Mount Manypeak and the Porongerup, and w
to Cape Leeuwin, this gigantic tree has onl
rival on our island continent, the *Eucalypt*
(var. *regnans*) of South-East Australia, the
of which it completely repeats. Startlin
monster specimen trees are on record, and
height is certainly not over-estimated at 400
Muir measured stems 300 feet long up to
When closely growing the young trees have
stem, so much so that a tree 180 feet
comparatively but little foliage, may have
one foot in diameter. Captain Pemberton
the circumference of one particularly giga
60 feet around the base.

"Widths of timber of as much as tw
obtained. The whitish smooth bark of th
mast-like straightness impresses a peculi
karri forests, and places this species into
the cortical system. These particular woo
very accessible, our experience of the val
is still imperfect; but the karri timber w
less important for the lumber trade, when
between King George's Sound and Ca
have been fully opened up for commerc
The wood is regarded as elastic and dur
so easily wrought as that of *E. margina*
valuable for shafts, spokes, fellces, an
particularly sought for large planks.
introduced the tree into Victoria, also
and North Africa, and to some extent
easily manageable in culture, and of c
growth. Abroad, this species, on ac

dimensions, passes very often as ***Eucalyptus colossea***, but the name here adopted, according to the laws of priority, cannot be changed now; it arose at a time when the colossal height of *E. diversicolor* was quite unknown. The specific name was derived from the paleness of the leaves on the lower side, unusual among allied species."

The sandalwood (*Santalum cypnorum*) is spread over an area extending from the Great Australian Bight to Sharks Bay. This wood has a powerful but fragrant odour, and is largely exported to China, where it is used especially in the manufacture of incense, and for turning and ornamental work, for which it is admirably adapted. It contains a large percentage of oil, and this has lately been exported to a small extent.

During the year 1893 sandalwood oil to the value of £2142 was exported, the bulk of it, £2122 worth, going to the United Kingdom.

In order to protect the sandalwood-cutting industry, and prevent the cutting and grubbing up of immature wood, a certain area was, on the 23rd day of May, 1893, proclaimed an area within which no live or growing sandalwood-tree should be cut or grubbed up during a period of two years, ending on the 26th April, 1895.

APPENDIX C.

Mining Rights.

Any person who shall be the holder of a miner's right shall be entitled to take possession of, mine, and occupy Crown lands for mining purposes; to cut, construct, and use races, dams, and reservoirs, roads, and tramways, which may be required for gold-mining purposes, through and upon any Crown lands; to take or divert water from

any spring, lake, pool, or stream situate in or flowing through Crown lands on a proclaimed goldfield, and to use such water for mineral purposes and for his own domestic purposes, and to use by way of an easement any unoccupied Crown lands; to cut timber on and to remove the same, and to remove any clay, stone, or gravel from any Crown lands for the purpose of building a residence or for mining purposes.

Gold-Mining Leases.

It shall be lawful for the Commissioner of Crown Lands to grant to any person a lease of any Crown land for mining purposes for any term not exceeding twenty-one years, and to renew the same for any such term at the yearly rental of £1 per acre. No such lease shall embrace an area exceeding twenty-five acres.

Leases may be surrendered.

Any lease may be surrendered at any time with the consent of the warden, provided that at the time of the surrender the conditions thereof, on the part of the lessee, shall have been fulfilled, so far as the time which may have elapsed shall permit, and that all payments due in respect thereof, up to date, shall have been made.

Proclamation of Goldfields.

It shall be lawful for the Governor to proclaim any portion of Crown land to be a goldfield.

Size of Protection Area.

A miner desirous of prospecting may mark off and hold a protection area of the following dimensions, viz.: Beyond the limits of a proclaimed goldfield, 400 yards by 400 yards; within the limits of a proclaimed goldfield, and

more than three miles from the nearest gold workings, 300 yards by 300 yards; not more than three miles, and more than one mile from such workings, 200 yards by 200 yards; not more than one mile and more than 400 yards, 150 yards by 150 yards.

Must be Marked and Registered.

All protection areas must be marked at each corner with a post standing three feet above ground and four inches in diameter, such posts to be kept uncovered and set in L-trenches three feet long and six inches deep, and such marking shall be deemed a sufficient title for thirty clear days, subject to the labour conditions; after which all protection areas within the limits of a proclaimed gold-field must be registered. A notice shall be posted on some conspicuous part of the area with the names of the holders, the numbers and dates of their miners' rights, the date on which the area was taken up, and the date of registration.

Labour Conditions.

Every protection area must be worked continuously every ordinary working day after seven clear working days after marking, by at least half the number of miners whose names appear on the notice as the holders of the area.

Prospector must Report Finding Gold.

Within seven clear days after the finding of gold in apparently payable quantities within any protection area, the holder shall report the said finding at the warden's office, under pain of forfeiture of such area. The warden shall then proceed to the ground, and if sufficient gold has been found to warrant it, he shall allot the prospectors a reward claim in addition to the number of ordinary claims to which they would otherwise be entitled.

What considered a sufficient Working.

A claim or leasehold shall be considered as effectively worked when eight hours' *bonâ fide* work is performed thereon by the complement of men required by the Regulations, on every working day except Saturday, when four hours' work shall be considered sufficient.

ALLUVIAL CLAIMS.

Ordinary Alluvial Claims.

Ordinary alluvial claims shall be—

For one man . .	50 feet by 100 feet.

Reward Claims.

The size of reward claims, which shall be given for the discovery of payable gold in any creek, river, or ordinary alluvial ground, shall be in proportion to the distance from the nearest occupied gold workings of the same description, and as follows :—

If distant over 400 yards .	Two claims of one man's ground.
,, one half mile .	Three men's ground.
,, one mile . .	Four ,, ,,
,, two miles . .	Six ,, ,,
,, three miles . .	Ten ,, ,,
If beyond the limits of a gold-field	Twenty ,, ,,

QUARTZ REEFS.

Reward Claims.

The reward claim which shall be given for the discovery of gold in apparently payable quantities on any new reef, or the re-discovery of the same on any reef previously occupied and abandoned, shall be in proportion to the distance from any reef being worked, and as follows :—

If distant less than 400 yards, 100 feet along the line of reef.

If distant more than 400 yards and less than one mile, 150 feet along the line of reef.

If distant more than one mile and less than two, 200 feet along the line of reef.

If distant more than two miles and less than ten, 300 feet along the line of reef.

If distant ten miles or more, 500 feet along the line of reef.

The width allowed in all these cases is 400 feet.

All the above rewards shall be in addition to what the parties would be otherwise entitled to in ordinary claims.

Number of Miners to be Employed.

Only one-half the number of miners to whom any quartz claim has been allotted need be employed thereon until it has been proved payable.

When payable the whole number must be employed.

Gold-Mining Leases.

All ground held under a mining-lease shall be worked by not less than one man for every three acres or part of three acres, unless exemption or partial exemption fro

work has been granted—provided that no lease shall be worked by less than two men.

Rewards for Discoveries of New Goldfields.

A reward of not less than £500 and not more than £1000 shall be paid to any person or persons who shall discover a goldfield—deemed by the Governor in Executive Council to be a payable goldfield—in any of the following divisions of the Colony, as defined by the Land Regulations of the 2nd March, 1887, namely:—

South-West	Division.	
Gascoyne	„	(Granted).
North-West	„	„
Eucla	„	„
Eastern	„	„

Not more than one such reward shall be payable in respect of each of the said divisions.

Prospecting.

Prospecting in an almost unexplored country like Western Australia is not by any means the pleasant work some people suppose it; for although, as a rule, there are no hostile tribes or wild beasts to be encountered, every man carries his life in his hand, and is always haunted by the most frightful death of which so many poor fellows perish, namely, want of water.

The greatest difficulties to be contended with may be put down as—want of topographical knowledge, great distances to travel, the scarcity of water and horse feed.

Before starting on a prospecting trip it should be ascertained that one of the party possesses a good knowledge of the general character of mineral country, is acquainted with a few rough tests, and has a knowledge of the different ores, whilst another should be a good bushman.

In prospecting a new country the prospector must divest himself of all the popular theories he has learned on another field, and be prepared to find the conditions under which the minerals exist apparently quite different. After finding a likely-looking belt of country, he should prospect it, and if he finds the object of his search, no matter if the lodes do not dip or strike in the direction he considers they should, or the rocks and vein stuff are not quite to his taste, he should give it a thorough trial before he condemns it, as no two districts in the world are precisely the same. This is particularly striking in this Colony, so much so in fact that the diggers have formed a theory that it has been turned upside down.—*Harry P. Woodward*, '*Mining Handbook to Western Australia*,' 1894.

Alluvial.

In prospecting, the greater specific gravity of the metals over earthy matter is taken advantage of; for, in the first place, Nature will have roughly sorted the heavier material from the lighter, the streams leaving the heavier near the lode, whilst the lighter they will have carried further. Then, again, the heavier will be found deposited in the pockets and on the bottom of the stream beds, whilst the sand and clay will overlie it.

Although particles of most metals are found in the alluvium, only gold and tin have been worked at a profit, so we will confine ourselves principally to the consideratior

of these two; but should particles of other ores or coal be discovered, they should be traced up to their source.

The prospectors will first, then, look for a promising belt of mineral country. These are generally broken and rough or open alluvial flats, with here and there low outcrops, the rocks being clay, slate, sandstone, quartzite, schist, etc., with quartz and ironstone veins and igneous dykes.

The quartz reefs should be well refined, and should not be of a highly crystalline or glassy nature, but from dead white to blue, iron-stained, gossany, and containing specks of other minerals, with lines in the stone which follow the strike of the reefs.

In such a country as this the stream beds which cut across these reefs should be tested for gold. This is done by sinking small holes until the "wash dirt" (a gravelly deposit) which rests upon the "bed rock" (slate, etc.) is reached, when a sample should be tried from the bottom and from the crevices in the slate.

The dirt, when first introduced into the dish, is puddled and washed until the whole is free and the water remains clear, all the clayey matter having been washed away. Then the dish is again filled with water, and agitated with a circular motion, holding the dish level at first, but gradually inclining it to the side on which there is a little groove in the rim, allowing the water to overflow, after which all upper coarser material is scraped off with the hand. This process is repeated several times, until only a small quantity of fine, heavy dirt is left, when it is finished by dipping the side of the dish under water and carefully floating or running off all the lighter matter; the gold being so much heavier, if present, it will hang back on the dish or in the little ledge in the rim. When this is sufficiently reduced, if no gold is visible to the naked eye, a glass can be used, and if any specks are

visible it proves that gold exists in the neighbourhood, and further prospecting should be done up-stream. This washing is very simple when once the knack is acquired; but the knowledge of the class of country to prospect and to be able to tell bottom when obtained are matters of experience.

Owing to the scarcity of water in this country washing is rarely possible, so that "dry-blowing" has to be resorted to; in this process two dishes are required, and often a cross riddle. The dirt is first either sifted or the large stones picked out; then, having chosen an airy position, the operator places an empty dish at his feet whilst the full one he raises above his head, gradually discharging its contents in such a manner into the one on the ground that the wind carries away to one side, beyond the dish, all the dust and lighter material. This process is repeated several times, and the larger stones picked out, until the dirt is reduced to a small compass, when the dish is shaken much in the same way as in washing, and the upper lighter material either brushed off with the hand or blown off by the mouth, when the gold will be found at the bottom of the dish. This process, of course, is not nearly so perfect as washing, and a great deal of the fine gold is lost; but when water is scarce it has proved a good substitute for washing, and is generally employed on the goldfields of this Colony.

Although gold is often found in payable quantities in highly metamorphic country, where mica slates, mica, and hornblend schist replace the clay slates, still there is always a character about it that a gold-digger of any experience would never pass over, although it is impossible to attempt to describe. It may, however, be taken as a general rule, that gold in payable quantities is very rarely found in amongst hard crystalline granitic rocks, and when it does occur is associated with a great deal of purites.

Another thing to be noticed is that all rocks which run in straight lines and break into flaggy pieces are not slate, and all other rocks that are not slate need not necessarily be either granite or basalt, as seems to be a very general idea.

Stream tin is prospected for much in the same manner as alluvium gold, the only difference being that it must occur in much larger quantities to make it pay, and that being so much lighter than gold it is much more difficult to save and separate from the other minerals. The class of country in which it occurs is generally of a more highly altered character than that which carries gold, the rocks being more granite in character, the tin being mostly derived from veins in the soft white granite dykes themselves, whilst the surrounding country is generally hard and rocky.

Lodes are either found by tracing up the fragments derived from them in the stream beds until on more is met with, when we know that we must be near the lode, the fragments increasing in quantity and size as the lode is approached; or by finding the outcrop of a lode themselves, across the country, when they may be tested directly. With most of the minerals, the metal or ore predominates in quantity over the vein stuff, which may be quartz, flux, or spar, calcite, etc., when they are then called lodes; but when, as with gold, the earthy matter is in the greater proportion, they are called reefs. Lodes are often covered at the surface by a cap of oxide of iron (iron hat), which can generally be traced with ease for a considerable distance at the surface; but the nature of the lode can only be discovered by opening it up, and even then, with the exception of copper or lead lodes, assays are necessary to determine their composition, as large quantities of gold, silver, cobalt, etc., may be contained without being visible.

The presence of gold may generally be determined by pulverising the stone and working it in the same manner as alluvial wash dirt, whilst samples supposed to contain tin must be assayed to determine what percentage of metal they contain.

The mineral in a lode does not, as a rule, run uniformly rich all through, but occurs in what are called shoots or bunches, whilst other portions are often quite barren. These shoots or bunches are very similar, and can, as a rule, be traced with the greatest ease after a little study, as they are found to behave in a similar manner in all veins of one series in a district. To understand this thoroughly seems at first a little complicated, as we speak of the lode dipping, say North, and the shoot West; but this can be demonstrated at once by taking a sheet of paper and drawing a line across it from the top right-hand corner to the bottom left-hand. Call the right-hand side the East, and the line will represent the shoot; now raise the paper first vertically in front of you, keeping the East in the right hand, and, as you are naturally facing the North, let the paper incline over towards you: this now gives you an inclined plane dipping North, with a line to represent a rich shoot dipping West.

True veins do not generally follow the strike of the rocks, and there is more chance of finding this class of lode permanent in depth than interbedded lodes, although the latter, in some instances, are also true lodes, but, as a rule, these latter are of very variable size, and often pinch out.

Should a lode pinch out, great care should be taken in following any little stray leader or face until the lode is again found, as true veins, with good striated casing, do not end suddenly in this way, but only pinch to make again. In the case of a lode suddenly cutting out by a fault or trouble we have, fortunately, an almost certain

rule to guide us to its re-discovery, as we find that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the beds on the upper side of the fault have slipped downwards. Therefore, should we, in working a lode or seam, come to a fault or face cutting out the lode, which, on exanination, prove to dip away from us, we should follow it down, but if, on the other hand, it dipped towards or under us, we should follow up the fault plane to look for the missing lode. The distance of the throw it is impossible, in the general way, to ascertain without the series of beds being known.

A prospector having discovered a lode, the first thing for him to determine is the size of the lode and shoot, extent in depth, value, the expenses in working, water-supply, fuel, timber, distance from port of shipment, means of carriage, and market for the commodity. All these should be carefully considered by the prospector, who, as a rule, has not sufficient capital to open a mine himself, so will require assistance from outside. He must assure himself that his discovery will pay to work before he wastes any time or money on it, or rushes into company making. This it is very difficult for him to do, as one is always inclined to believe what one hopes, and others are always to be found who will back him up in this idea, simply with the object of making something out of it by floating a mine, which they know perfectly well will never pay; and it is not until the unfortunate prospector has spent all the money he had that he realises that his mine is of no value.—*Harry P. Woodward, 'Mining Handbook to Western Australia,'* 1894.

APPENDIX D.

Typhoid Fever in Australia.

A Chat with Dr. F. Edgar Williams.

"And in what way is typhoid contracted?" I inquired.

"Well, to start with, it should be remembered," replied the doctor, "that typhoid fever is contagious, not infectious; that is to say, it is not carried directly from one person to another, as is the case with scarlet fever. Without going into details, it is fair to say that it is almost impossible for those attending on the sick to catch the disease, as long as proper cleanliness is observed in regard to the patient. The reason of the disease being sometimes epidemic is simply that disinfection has not been properly carried out, or that the best methods of sanitation have not been observed. This, of course, particularly applies to the methods of sewerage and the sources of the water-supply. Water, and then milk, are the commonest factors in the spread of the disease."

"Do you think that a new country is more conducive than an old country to the spread of typhoid germs?"

"No; the disease would have to be imported there in the first place; but on the other hand, when it once gets a footing in a new country it is more likely to spread, owing to defective sanitary arrangements and want of proper medical supervision."

"And what, in your opinion, are the best disinfectants?"

"Chloride of lime has proved to be the most efficacious of all, and should hold an important place in every village store. There should be, when fighting the typhoid germ, (1) free use of water, (2) free access of air, (3) abundance of general vegetation. Typhoid is a disease which is no respecter of rich or poor, age or sex."

"And what do you recommend as general safeguards against catching the disease?"

"Well, of course, it is of primary importance to enter the infected district in a state of good health, and, as far as possible, to keep yourself well up to the mark. You should eat carefully and drink moderately, and with regard to water, in order to be on the safe side, you should have it boiled or distilled, no matter what the water be used for. Should you feel the slightest symptoms of fever—any rise in the temperature—do not attempt to pass it unnoticed, but go at once to a medical man, if there is one, or if not, lie in a recumbent position, taking only milk, or milk and lime water, with chicken broth, if obtainable, or the various tinned meat juices, such as Liebig's and Brand's. Purgatives should never be used, unless ordered by a medical man. Every traveller should carry a clinical thermometer. If the fever produces a high temperature, such as 104°, the patient may be covered with a wet sheet, frequently immersed in ice-cold water, or, better still, vinegar and water, if ice is not procurable; but for lower degrees of fever, such as 100°, 101°, 102°, two grains of sulphate of quinine should be taken every four hours, or two grains of phenacetui, until some effect is produced. Of course, good nursing is the real cure for typhoid.

"My final word of advice is to avoid any feeling of nervousness, for, where one man contracts the disease, a thousand, under similar circumstances, could avoid it; and, above all, don't tamper with drugs. A little knowledge in a case of fever may prove an exceedingly dangerous thing."

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